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John Wesley

SKETCHES

OF

EMINENT METHODIST MINISTERS.

With Portraits and other Illustrations.

EDITED BY

JOHN M'CLINTOCK, D. D.

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Preface.

THE "age of chivalry" was renewed in its noblest aspects, in the beginnings of Methodism. Its history, especially in America, is a record of moral heroism unsurpassed in any age of the Church. The story is yet unwritten. The historians of the country have generally ignored, in utter blindness, one of the richest fields open to them; and the historians of the Church have done but little toward a true and ample account of the vast and valorous labours of these modern apostles. Every memorial, then, however slight, of the lives and toils of the fathers is at once a blessing to the Church, and a contribution to the true history of the civilization of the age. To this class belong the sketches of Wesley, Fletcher, Garrettson, M'Kendree, Roberts, Pickering, and Hedding, given in this volume.

To a later period belong the lives of Fisk, Emory, Levings, and Olin; but the very names will justify their collocation here with the elder fathers. They are

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illustrations—wonderful illustrations in fact—of the vigorous and healthful growth of Methodism; each of them affording a noble specimen of high intellectual power and large accomplishments devoted, with entire self-denial, to the service of the Church of God.

One memoir, and only one, of a living person is given: and the name of JABEZ BUNTING, the great leader of English Methodism, will justify that deviation from the plan of the volume, if any name could.

The names of the authors of the sketches are given in the table of contents, except in two instances not left to the editor's discretion.

Should this volume meet with the favour of the public, it will be followed by another, and perhaps by several, in succeeding years, printed and illustrated in the same beautiful style.

JOHN M'CLINTOCK.

NEW-YORK, Oct. 20, 1853.

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John Wesley.

The incidents of history and the objects of nature derive much of their impressiveness from the circumstances surrounding both. Contrast is essential to grand effects. The massacre at Bethlehem gathers blackness from the infant age of the victims; and the frantic leap of Niagara contrasts finely with the oily smoothness of the river above the Fall. The voyager near "earth's central line"—the region of perpetual sun and frequent calm, where the surface of the sea is unbroken with a billow, yet the bulk of the ocean moves together like some monster labouring under an oppressive load

"in torrid clime

Dark heaving, boundless, endless, and sublime;"—

marks the huge sweltering gambols of the whale, and hears the loud hiss and rush of the jet he projects into the air best in the cool gray and death-like stillness of the early dawn. The level and the quiet of all around convey the most vivid and instantaneous impressions to the watcher's eye and ear; and "There is that leviathan!"

(Psa. civ, 26,) bursts from the lips with an assurance and a rapture which its unwieldy *pas seuls* would not awaken amid the stirring activities of day and the distraction of stormier scenes and wilder moods. And having traversed under a burning summer sun the length of some Swiss valley, and encountered in your fatiguing march, knapsack on shoulder and staff in hand, the varieties of mid-winter temperature by the *mer de glace*, and the heat of the dog-days in deep, serene, and sheltered nooks, where air to breathe seems almost as great a rarity as wind to blow, where the fumes of the rank vegetation and the wild flowers are stifling and unhealthy,—what think you is the fittest time and place to hear the thunder of the avalanche, and trace and tremble at its fall? It is just at that cool hour when, refreshed at your hostelry, your sense of weariness is removed, but sufficient languor remains to tame down your mind into harmony with the scene, and you wander out some half-mile from your temporary home, like the orphan patriarch of old, to meditate at eventide. The sun has just set over the Jungfrau or Schreckhorn, and, liberal of its cosmetics, has laid its red upon the dead cheek of the everlasting snow. There is not a breeze stirring. The brief twilight is just about to close in night. The wing of the last loitering bee has been folded in its hive. The beetle has droned his sonorous vesper-hymn. All is silence, uninterrupted by a sound, except perchance at distant intervals the faint bleat of the goat on the rock high overhead, or the whistle of some shepherd-pipe in the hand of the rustic returning from his labour:—

“For here the patriarchal days

Are not a pastoral fable; pipes in the liberal air

Mix with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd.”

Then on the startled ear, that has been learning wisdom at the feet of silence, bursts a crack, like the sharp instantaneous report of a rifle, followed and drowned on the moment by a confused rustle, hoarse rumble, and afterward a heavy thunderous sound of fall and concussion, comparable to nothing so much as the cadence of ten thousand woolpacks dropped together upon a boarden floor. The danger is not near, but the vibrations of the air and the almost breathless hush of the evening make it seem so. A mountain of snow and commingled ice has fallen down some gorge that debouches into our valley, and a spray of snowy particles, which rises cloudwise into the darkening sky, shows the scene and the nature of the ruinous visitation. The tranquillity of the hour makes the crash more loud, the devastation more appalling. Amid lightning, tempest, and thunder, the chief effect had been lost—the avalanche had been unnoticed—the crown of majesty had fallen unheeded from the monarch mountain's head.

A phenomenon with like effect, appealing to a different sense, will show itself in other scenes. As the traveller approaches Rome from the south, leaving Naples with its charms and its cheats, its lazzaroni and its liveliness, its exquisite sky and sea, with its execrable superstition, dirt, and frivolty behind; but notwithstanding all its drawbacks, where

“Simply to feel that we breathe, that we live,
Is worth all the joys that life elsewhere can give,”

and passing the sounding sea and the dismal marsh, lofty Terracina and lowly Fondi, at length tops the range that encloses the Campagna southward, what object is it chiefly

arrests the eye? In that great ocean of a plain, a hundred miles by fifty, the seeming crater of some gigantic volcano, with its sulphur streams and its noisome stench, like a bark upon the waters, floats imperial Rome, the object most conspicuous in the eternal city the wondrous cupola, which speaks her the queen of architectural grandeur, resting like a diadem upon her brow, and bearing no remote resemblance to the tiara of her pontiff ruler;—nothing besides can arrest the gaze. The eye takes in, in its sweep, the mountain line of the northern and eastern horizon, Soracte, empurpled by distance, with its sister ridges on the right, the silver sea with Ostia on the left. It marks the ruins that here and there stud the plain—the tombs, the towns, the towers, the arches, and the aqueducts, the long reaches of which last stretch in picturesque continuity here and there, like a caravan of mules winding over the sierras of Granada. We stand on the brow of Albano, sheltering ourselves from the midday sun under the shade of some broad plane-tree, or luxuriant elm, or embowering vine, and see—we cannot but see—the tomb of Pompey, the ruins of Bovillæ, Frattochie, Torre di Mezza Via, perhaps even Metella's tomb, and catch glimpses now and then of the unequalled Via Appia, its geometrical rectitude in striking contrast with the serpentine Tiber; but above all, and beyond all, we look upon that group in the centre of the picture, that lone mother of dead empires, “the Niobe of nations”—Rome. All objects besides are unattractive; the mountains too distant, the ruins too bare, the wild flowers of this huge prairie too minute and commonplace for special attention; all things near the soil, too, quiver in the dazzling light and burning heat of noon; but high above the undulating

vapour, and towering in its Parian whiteness up into an angelic sky, rises the colossal creation of Buonarotti's genius. We glance at other objects; we gaze at this. It breaks the line of our northern horizon with a pomp and pretension that nothing besides can dare. It looms out of the bosom of the "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" foreground, a pleasant and most exciting landmark, an ecclesiastical Eddystone in the unbilowly sea of the Campagna. This greatest of man's works, which would be insignificant beside the works of God—the Alps or the nearer Apennines—is here great, comparatively so, just as a man of five feet stature would be a giant among Lilliputians of one. We speak not of its moral interest—*that* is superlative and enchaining; but of its material inches, whereby it overtops almost every object within a circuit of twenty miles. Look from any extremity of the Campagna to the centre, and St. Peter's, like a stone Saul, over-measures all competing altitudes by the head and lofty shoulders.

And this brings us, by a roundabout way possibly, to the point at which we aim—a comparative estimate of the greatness of John Wesley by the littleness of the times in which he lived. Our purpose has been too obvious, we trust, to need the application of our figures. We mean simply to imply that Wesley was that waterspout and snowy spray-jet, roaring in the stillness of morning, and arched over the calm surface of the sea on the gray canvass of the horizon;—Wesley that ice-crash rasping down the mountain-side, startling the ear of silence in Helvetic solitudes, upsetting the equilibrium of all things, shaking the earth and air and the listener's frame, like the spasm of an earthquake;—Wesley, in fine, that dome, "the vast

and wondrous dome," lofty in proportions, perfect in symmetry, suspended in mid-air, by the happy conception of him whose great thought, like all great thoughts, was manifestly inspired, "a heavenly guest, a ray of immortality," and which aerial pile, wander where we will within its range, is the attracting centre of vision, the cynosure of all eyes.

In the particular field Wesley took upon him to cultivate he stood alone, or almost alone, and his position adds magnitude to all his dimensions. He fills the picture. It were scarce exaggeration to travesty the Grand Louis's terse egotism, "The State! that is, I," and put it into our reformer's mouth at the commencement of his career—"Religion! that is, I." The religious sensibility of England lay dead or chained in "the breathless, hushed, and stony sleep" of the Princess Dormita and her retinue in the fairy tale. He alone seemed awake to the exigencies of the times, the responsibilities of the ministry, the corruption of manners, and the value of souls. This statement will of course be understood with all the qualification truth demands on behalf of some exemplary parish clergymen who sparsely enlightened the darkness around them, but who never passed into the broad sunshine of general reputation or extensive influence. There were those, we gladly own, who bowed not the knee to the prevailing dissoluteness or indifference; but, like angels' visits, these were few and far between. And it is not to be denied that in many non-conformist places of worship, under the combined influence of the persecutions of earlier years, general contempt, and their close-borough constitution and government which took them out of the healthful and conservative current of public opinion, vital religion

was becoming a name, and the doctrine of the Cross passing into "another gospel" in which the Cross had no place. Arianism, with stealthy steps, was creeping in upon the fold of Presbyterianism "for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy;" while Independency either withered into a cold protest against the established episcopacy, shot into seed in the unhealthy luxuriance of hyper-Calvinism, or was too insignificant to be of any account whatever in an ecclesiastical notice of the period.

The general condition of the Church of England was deplorable. There was no lack of learning and respectability in many quarters, but, as a whole, its state could not satisfy a conscientious observer. The study of the Greek language and the introduction of the theology of the Greek school since the Reformation, together with various political causes, had combined to produce a latitudinarian and moderated style of preaching and acting among the clergy at large. The best men were most entirely under the influences we have named. Their learning, their enlightened hatred of the fanaticism under the commonwealth, and an honourable sense of the advantages of their position, made them carefully shun the excesses of non-conforming zeal, and generously avoid giving offence to conscientious dissenters. The names of Tillotson and Tennison, Doctors Samuel Clark and Jortin, will tolerably fairly represent the reigning spirit of the better part of the clerical body about the commencement of the eighteenth century; while others were contented to be as devoid of evangelical unction as they, without their accomplishments and decent behaviour. But in the ministry of souls moderation is madness, and want of zeal death. Men betake themselves to a formal minister as they do to

the grave-digger, an inevitable but unpleasant functionary, whose services they never relish, and whose inane moralities cannot edify. Such, unfortunately, was the ecclesiastical condition of England when the Wesleys arose, and it is no breach of charity to aver, that, weighed in the balances of heaven, the existing ministry throughout the country was found at that period, as to its most exalted aims and divine results, utterly wanting. We are not blind to the subordinate advantages a widely-established corporation of more or less educated men must entail upon a land, men by their profession the friends of order, decency, and humanity; but at the same time we cannot forget that the Church is neither a police-court, a philosophical school, nor an almonry. Men may be mild magistrates, wise teachers, exemplary country gentlemen, without fear and without reproach on the score of morals and manners, and yet be destitute of the spirit of their office and ignorant of its claims. We draw the veil over anything worse which presents itself for comment in the clerical profession at that period. There was enough in the aspect of the times, even upon the most indulgent showing, to make the mission of some such agent as John Wesley a necessity as imperative as the mission of one of the judges in the straits and abjectness of Israel, or the requisitions of the economic law that the demand regulates the supply.

In such circumstances was Providence nurturing a man for the hour, while the hour was as divinely and obviously prepared for the man. And neither from kingly courts nor cloistered cells was the hero of "this strange eventful history" to come—the man that was to work wider change upon the religious and social aspect of England than has

ever been effected by any reformer since Christianity visited our shores. In truth, his sympathies were neither with the monk nor the monarch, but, a child of the people, as all great reformers have been, his sympathies were with the masses, the men from whom he sprung. He was reared amid obscurity, poverty, and rebuke,—rebuke that implied no disgrace, poverty which piety hallowed, obscurity that bred no discontent,—and he never forgot the discipline of his childhood nor the tradition of his poor but godly parentage, and his heart ever found its most genial soil amid the humble, holy, and enduring people of God. Of ambition, with which he has been most recklessly charged, he seems to have been absolutely incapable, except the ambition of doing good. He had rather suffer any day than shine. In fact, to suffer, if by that be meant to labour to fatigue, and self-denial to austerity, became a necessity of his nature, while to shine was as deliberately rejected as this was pursued. And it was this thorough oneness of mind, propension, and condition with the people, which prompted and controlled his career. He looked at the man through the frieze-jacket of careful thrift and “the looped and windowed raggedness” of abject penury; yea, he looked at him in the haunts of vice and the prison-house of the criminal, and saw written upon him even there, in indubitable presence, the image, though sorely mutilated, of God, just as beneath the jewelled cap of maintenance and the purple of nobility he saw no more. Not knowing, therefore, or not heeding the distinctions that obtain among men, the object of his ministry was man. He was swayed by no class predilections, or unsocial partialities, save that his high sense of duty and the special demands of his mission made him prevailingly the

friend of the friendless and the comforter of the lowly. In this aspect of his work his imitation of Christ was pre-
eminent, that his labour of love was specially consecrated
“to seek and to save that which was lost.”

But we anticipate, and must glance at the boy Wesley, and the circumstances which proved the Campus Martius to train him for his lifelong conflict “with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Close bordering on the winding Trent, in one of the richest portions of Lincolnshire, is the parish and manor of Epworth, the church standing upon an elevation reached by a gentle ascent about four miles from the river, but shaded from view by a shoulder of the hill. Right well do we remember our pilgrimage to that spot a few short months ago. The heavens smiled propitiously on our purpose, for never did a brighter spring sun pour gladness into the heart than that which shone upon us as we crept blithely along the road that gradually swept up from the ferry. Our sensations we will not attempt to describe, as we paced the pathway of the quiet old country town, where the first relic we picked up was the characteristic one of a torn page of the New Testament. Suffice it to say, that it was with more than common emotion we looked upon the font where the man whose genius made the celebrity of the place had been baptized; upon the communion table where Wesley had often officiated, yet whence he had been rudely repulsed by an intemperate and ungrateful priest, who had owed his all to the Wesleys; on the tombstone of his father, which on that occasion and subsequently served the itinerant John for a pulpit, from which he addressed weeping multitudes in

EPWORTH CHURCH.







EPWORTH RECTORY.

the churchyard; on the withered sycamore beneath whose shade he must have played; and finally, through the courtesy of the rector, the Hon. and Rev. Charles Dundas, on the parsonage, now scarcely recognisable for the same from the improvement it has received at the hand of wealth guided by the eye of taste, though old Jeffrey's room still retains much of its ghostliness. The day that revealed to us all these and sundry memorabilities is one to be noted with chalk in our calendar.

The lower ground of the isle of Axholme, in the midst of which Epworth stands, had from time immemorial been subject to almost constant submersion from the river, and was little better than a Mere, the title Leland gives it in his *Itinerary*. Its value, however, was so obvious to the eyes of both natives and foreigners, that a charter to drain this whole country side was given to Cornelius Vermuyden in the time of the Stuarts, and the thing was done, to the rescue of a considerable part of the king's chase from the dominion of the lawless waters, and to the increase of the arable and pasture land of the neighbourhood, to the extent of many thousand acres of "a fine rich brown loam, than which there is none more fertile in England." To this parish the father of our hero was presented in the year 1693, as a reward for his merits in defending from the press the Revolution of 1688. The living was of inconsiderable amount, under £200 per annum, but by no means contemptible to a waiter upon Providence, whose clerical income had never before averaged £50 per year, and was the more agreeable as it promised to lead to something better, since the ground of his present advancement was the recognition in high places of the opportune loyalty of the literary parson. Here, with a regularly

increasing family, without any corresponding increase of stipend, the exemplary rector laboured for ten years ere the birth of his son John, "contending with low wants and lofty will," with the dislike and opposition of his unruly parishioners, with his own chafed tempers and disappointed expectations, with serious inroads upon his income by fire and flood, and with the drag-chain of a poverty that pressed upon the means of subsistence, and which his literary labours availed little to lighten.

Our sympathies gather round the "busy bee" whose active industry and zeal could not shield his hive from spoliation and misfortune, while many a contemporary drone surfeited in abundance, and wore out a useless life in luxury, self-indulgence, and criminal ease. Ere his son John, the future father of Methodism, had completed his third year, the rector of Epworth was in jail for debt. The exasperation of party, which he took no means to allay, but rather chafed and provoked, for he gloried in his "Church and State politics," being "sufficiently *elevated*," brought down upon him the unmanly vengeance of his creditors, and they spited their political opponent by throwing him into prison. This affliction brought him friends, who succeeded in procuring his release after an incarceration of some months, but neither enlarged his resources nor increased his prudence. He seems to have been a stern if a faithful pastor, and when called to encounter prejudices, to have met them with prejudices as virulent of his own.

Into such a home as all this bespeaks, needy but not sordid, poverty-stricken yet garnished by high principle and dogged resolution, full of anxieties for temporal provision, yet free from the discontent that dishonours God,

CHARTER HOUSE.



was John Wesley ushered, on the 17th of June, 1703. For all that made the comfort of that home, the joy of his childhood and the glory of his riper years, the great reformer was indebted to his mother; as who, that is ever great or good, is not?

Never was child more fortunate in a maternal guide than young Wesley, and never could mother claim more exclusively the credit of her son's early training. At eleven years of age he left home for the Charterhouse-school, but up to that period he was educated by his mother. Literary composition, correspondence, and parochial and secular duties fully employed his father; but amid the domestic cares of fifteen living children, his pious and gifted mother found time to devote six hours daily to the education of her family.

Passing from under the tutelage of his accomplished mother, young Wesley became at the Charterhouse a sedate, quiet, and industrious pupil. The regularity of system which characterized the man was even then visible in the boy, taking his methodical race round the garden thrice every morning. His excellent habits were rewarded by the esteem of his masters, and his election six years afterward to Christ's Church College, Oxford. At the University he maintained the reputation for scholarship acquired at school, and ere long was chosen a Fellow of Lincoln, and appointed Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the Classes to the University. And here properly begins the religious life of the young reformer. Prior to his ordination, which took place in 1725, he had devoted himself to such a course of reading as he considered most likely to conduce to his spiritual benefit, and qualify him for his sacred office. Upon the mind of one so religiously

and orderly brought up, the *Ascetic Treatises* of Thomas à Kempis, and Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*, would naturally make a deep impression, the more as their earnest strain would contrast so favourably with the epicurean *insouciance*, or the stolid fatalism of his classic favourites. The highest effort of Pagan heroism and philosophy was to invite their dead to the feast and orgie, and mock at death by crowning him with flowers, while of all the sublimer objects of life they were as ignorant as to its more serious duties they were unequal. Surfeited with their dainties which he had relished as a child, when he became a man he put away childish things with the loathing of a matured and higher taste. Assistant to his father for two years in the adjacent living of Wroote, and engaged thus in the actualities of the ministry, his soul found more and more occasion for self-examination, self-renunciation, and devotion to the solemn work of his calling. Impressions deepened upon his mind which could not fail to issue in great good to the Church of Christ, impressions made by his temper of body, early training, and the studies and duties of his vocation. His views were very imperfect of the doctrines of grace, but his heart was undergoing that process of preparation for their full disclosure and ready reception which might be resembled to turning up the fallow ground. He was not far from the kingdom of God. While the young clergyman was engaged in the searchings of heart attendant upon his early experience, and was prosecuting the labours of his country cure, God was maturing at Oxford a system of events which was to issue in the result he sought—light to the understanding, peace to the conscience, purity to the life, and an assured sense of the divine forgiveness.

Charles Wesley, the younger brother, during John's two years' absence on his cure, seemed to have waked all at once from the religious apathy of his under-graduate course, and falling in with two or three young men of kindred feelings with his own, they associated for mutual improvement and religious exercises. They received the sacrament weekly, and practised certain very obvious but very unusual austerities in regard to food, raiment, and amusements, quite sufficient to draw upon them general observation. The world, which has a keen sense of the ridiculous, saw in all this only oddity and folly, and in sooth it is no necessary adjunct of real religion—perhaps thought it something still less worthy of respect—hypocrisy, and love of notoriety. But observers could have borne even with these defects better than with what they found in the enthusiastic objects of their dislike—earnest practical godliness, which intimidation could not daunt nor ridicule shame. They gave these parties, therefore, the names of Sacramentarians, Bible-bigots, Bible-moths, the Holy, and the Godly Club. But, from the orderly method of their life, the name Methodists, that of an ancient sect of physicians, gradually stuck to the latter party, one not altogether new in its applications to religion any more than the Puritans (Cathari) of an earlier date. This title they neither sought nor shunned. If it gave no glory, it implied little reproach. But they justified their religious views by the practical value of their measures. They could appeal to their works as their best vindication. Their acquittal were triumphant were the tree of their profession judged by its fruits. We know not where, out of the Gospels, a more successful appeal is made in favour of practical godliness, the religion of good sense and good

works, than in the document we are about to submit to our readers. Never was there less enthusiasm, fanaticism, rant, (*O si sic omnia!*) in any page of letter-press—never more convincing ratiocination, more clear exposition of duty, than in its dozen quiet interrogations.

“Whether it does not concern all men, of all conditions, to imitate Him, as much as they can, who went about doing good?

“Whether all Christians are not concerned in that command, While we have time let us do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith?

“Whether we shall not be more happy hereafter the more good we do now?

“Whether we may not try to do good to our acquaintance among the young gentlemen of the university?

“Particularly whether we may not endeavour to convince them of the necessity of being Christians and of being scholars?

“May we not try to do good to those that are hungry, or naked, or sick? If we know any necessitous family, may we not give them a little food, clothes, or physic, as they want?

“If they can read, may we not give them a Bible or a Prayer-Book, or a Whole Duty of Man? May we not inquire now and then how they have used them, explain what they do not understand, and enforce what they do?

“May we not enforce upon them the necessity of private prayer, and of frequenting the church and sacrament?

“May we not contribute what we are able toward having their children clothed and taught to read?

“May we not try to do good to those who are in prison?”

“May we not release such well disposed persons as remain in prison for small debts?”

“May we not lend small sums of money to those who are of any trade, that they may procure themselves tools and materials to work with?”

“May we not give to them who appear to want it most a little money, or clothes, or physic?”

Such is their apology—a probe for the conscience, which searches the latent wound, but only searches to heal—a promptuary of every good word and work—a brief but weighty preface to a life of labour and of love—a whole library of folio divinity in small—the casuistry of an honest and good heart resolved in a handful of questions—the law that came by Moses, clothed in the inimitable grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ—a most Holy Inquisition of which no brotherhood need be ashamed—the beatitudes of our Lord charged home, and chambered in the heart by the impulse of an earnest query—a *thema con variazione*, making melody in the heart unto the Lord while breathing deep-toned benevolence toward man. If ever Church originated in an unexceptionable source it was this. If ever one could challenge its foundation as resting on the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, it was this. If ever Church was cradled, as its Lord was cradled, in supreme glory to God and good will to man—if ever Church at its birth was an incarnation of the first and chief commandment, charity, the sum and end of the law, it was this Church. This is more than can be said of any of the great moral revolutions of the world. Almost all the more remarkable changes in human opinion, the truths as well as the

errors, have been mixed with a considerable alloy of human infirmity in their origin and conduct. Envy and selfishness, and pride and ambition, have shown themselves in various degrees, as moving powers in the world of thought and religion, and though the results under divine superintendence have been overruled to good, the process has been faulty. We cannot say, for we do not believe, that there was not much of human passion at the bottom of the indignant Luther's breach with Rome, while ingenuous Protestantism must blush over the sensuality and cruelty of Henry VIII. Even the self-denying non-conformists do not show so bright, when we reflect that the majority of them, in closing their ministry in the Church on St. Bartholomew's day, did never perhaps belong to what is popularly called the Church of England, nor object so much to the imposition of a particular prayer-book, as to any prayer-book at all, being in fact Presbyterians and Independents. But here, alike free from the infirmities of Aletharch, or Heresiarch, free from selfish aim or end, unfraught with doctrinal pride, uninflated by youthful presumption, a few good men go forth, a second college of apostles, ordained with a like ordination, having the unction of the Holy One, and charged with the same divine mission, "to seek and to save that which was lost," freely receiving from heaven, and freely giving in return. Language and imagery would fail us in depicting sooner than our soul cease from admiring the purity and sublimity of the object these compassionate men sought by their personal consecration, their visits of mercy, and their prayers:—

"I can't describe it though so much it strike,
Nor liken it—I never saw the like."

Looking down, like the divine humanity of the Son of God from the height of his priestly throne, far above every feeling save that of sorrow for the sufferings and sins of men, their eyes suffused with pitiful tears, and they resolved to do what they could. Suffice it to say, that, baptized in such a laver as this, the Methodist Church, which has since attained a respectable maturity, has never renounced the principles that hallowed its early dedication,—has kept the whiteness of its garments unsullied by the pollutions of the world,—has raised visibly everywhere the banner of mercy to the bodies and souls of men, and can say still, as it professed then, “I am free from the blood of all men.”

John Wesley will be found to have given currency by his course of action to a set of divine ideas easily acted upon, but not always clearly apprehended, which make up the sum of personal religion, and without which, it may be added, personal religion cannot exist. This is the philosophy of his career, perhaps very imperfectly understood by himself, probably never drawn out by him in a systematic form, yet sufficiently obvious to us who look back upon his completed life, and live amid the results of his labours. Immersed in the complexities of the game, the turmoil of the storm in which his busy life was cast, the unceasing struggle of his soul with the gigantic evils of the world, he could neither observe nor analyze, as we can do, the elements arrayed against him, nor the principles evolved in the conflict that were ministrant to his success. As we are in the habit of raising instinctively the arm, or lowering the eyelid to repel or shun danger, so he adopted measures and evolved truths by force of circumstances more than by forethought, those truths and

measures so adapted to his position as a preacher of righteousness amid an opposing generation, that we recognise in their adaptation and natural evolution proof of their divineness. They are the same truths which were exhibited in the first struggles of an infant Christianity with the serpent of Paganism, and when exhibited again upon a like arena seventeen centuries afterward, with similar success, are thus proved to be everywhere and always the same, eternal as abstract truth, and essential as the existence of God.

The first grand truth thrown up upon the surface of John Wesley's career, we take to be the absolute necessity of personal and individual religion.

To the yoke of this necessity he himself bowed at every period of his history: never even when most completely led astray as to the ground of the sinner's justification before God, did he fail to recognise the necessity of conversion and individual subjection to the laws of the Most High. What he required of others, and constantly taught, he cheerfully observed himself. Very soon after starting upon his course did he learn that the laver of baptism was unavailing to wash from the stain of human defilement, the supper of the Lord to secure admission to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and Church organization to draft men collectively to heaven by simple virtue of its corporate existence. These delusions, whereby souls are beguiled to their eternal wrong, soon ceased to juggle him, for his eye, kindled to intelligence by the Spirit of God, pierced the transparent cheat. He ascertained at a very early period that the Church had no delegated power to ticket men in companies for a celestial journey, and sweep them railroad-wise in multitudes to their goal; consequently that

this power, where claimed or conceded, was usurpation on the one hand, and a compound of credulousness and servility on the other; insulting to God and degrading to man. But he began with himself. We suppose he never knew the hour in which he did not feel the need of personal religion to secure the salvation of the soul. He was happily circumstanced in being the son of pious and intelligent parents, who would carefully guard him against the prevalent errors on these points. He never could have believed presentation at the font to be salvation, nor the vicarious vow of sponsors a substitute for personal renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil: and he early showed this. When the time of his ordination drew nigh, and he was about to be inducted into the cure of souls, he was visited with great searchings of heart. His views of the mode of the sinner's acceptance with God were confused indeed; but on the subject of personal consecration they may be said never to have varied. Fighting his way, as he was called to do, through a lengthened period of experimental obscurity, "working out his salvation with fear and trembling," we nevertheless cannot point to any moment in his spiritual history in which he was not a child of God. What an incomparable mother must he have had! what a hold must she have established upon his esteem and confidence, to whom this fellow of a college referred his scruples and difficulties in view of his ordination, and whom his scholarly father bade him consult when his own studious habits and abundant occupations forbade correspondence with himself! Animated to religious feeling about this time, he made a surrender of himself to God, made in partial ignorance, but never revoked. "I resolved," he says, "to dedicate *all* my life

to God, *all* my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced there was no medium; but that *every part* of my life (not *some* only) must either be a sacrifice to God or myself,—that is, in effect, to the devil.” And his pious father, seconding his son’s resolve, replies: “God fit you for your great work! fast, watch, and pray! believe, love, endure, and be happy!” And so he did according to his knowledge, for a more conscientious clergyman and teacher, for the space of ten years, never lived than the Rev. John Wesley, fellow and tutor of Lincoln. But there was a whole world of spiritual experience yet untrodden by him amid the round of his college duties, ascetic practices, and abounding charities. His heart told him, and books told him, and the little godly company who met in his rooms all told him, in tones more or less distinct, that he had not yet attained—that he was still short of the mark—that the joys of religion escaped his reach, though its duties were unexceptionably performed. His course of reading, the mystic and ascetic writers, together with the dry* scholastic divinity that furnishes the understanding but often drains the heart, tended to this result, to fill the life with holy exercises rather than to overflow the soul with sacred pleasure. Of the simple, ardent, gladsome, gracious piety of the poor, he yet knew next to nothing.

* Our censure of the scholastic divinity only reaches to the case in hand, as among our favourite authors we reckon Thomas Aquinas, and the Master of the Sentences. We are glad to be able to justify our partiality by such respectable authority as that of Luther. In his book *De Conciliis*, (tom. vii, p. 237,) he writes thus of Peter Lombard:—“Nullis in conciliis, nullo in patre tantum reperies, quam in libro sententiarum Lombardi. Nam patres et concilia quosdam tantum articulos tractant, Lombardus autem omnes; sed in præcipuis illis articulis de Fide et Justificatione nimis est jejunus, quanquam Dei gratiam magnopere predicat.”

But God was leading him through the wilderness of such an experience as this by a right way to a city of habitation, doubtless that he might be a wise instructor to others who should be involved hereafter in mazes like his own. He looked upon religion as a debt due by the creature to the Creator, and he paid it with the same sense of constraint with which one pays a debt, instead of regarding it as the ready service of a child of God. A child of God could not be other than religious; but, more than this, he would not if he could; religion is his

"vital breath,
It is his native air."

But Wesley did not understand as yet the doctrine of free pardon, the new birth, and the life of faith: he therefore worked, conscientiously and laboriously indeed, but like a slave in chains. But he was not too proud to learn from very humble teachers, a few Moravian emigrants that sailed in the same vessel with him to Georgia. Their unaffected humility, unruffled good temper, and serenest self-possession in prospect of death when storms overtook the ship, struck him forcibly, and made him feel that they had reached an eminence in the divine life on which his college studies, extensive erudition, and pains-taking devotion had failed to land himself. He therefore sat himself at their feet; he verified the Scripture metaphor, and became "a little child." In nothing was the lofty wisdom of John Wesley and his submission to divine teaching more apparent than in this, that he made himself a fool that he might be wise. Salvation by grace, and the witness of the Spirit, were taught him by these God-fearing and happy Moravians; and his understanding became full

of light. It was only, however, some three years afterward, subsequent to his return to England, that the joy of this free, present, eternal salvation flowed in upon his soul. The peace of God which passeth all understanding took possession of heart and mind through Christ Jesus, and for fifty years afterward he never doubted, he never could doubt, of his acceptance with our Father who is in heaven. The sunshine of his soul communicated itself to his countenance, and lighted all his conversation. To speak with him was to speak with an angel of God.

From that time he began to preach a new doctrine, a doctrine of privilege as well as duty, of acceptance through the Beloved, and assured sense of pardon, and the happiness of the service of God. And God gave him unlooked for, unhopèd for success. Excluded by almost universal consent from the churches of the Establishment, he betook himself to barns, and stable-yards, and inn rooms; and ultimately, with Whitefield, to the open air, in the streets and lanes of the city, in the hills and valleys, on the commons and heaths, and with power and unction, with the Holy Ghost and much assurance did he testify to each of his hearers the doctrine of personal repentance and faith,—the necessity of the new birth for the salvation of the soul. And signs and wonders followed in them that believed: multitudes were smitten to the ground under the sword of the Spirit; many a congregation was changed into a Bochim, a place of weeping; and amid sobs, and tears, and wailings, beneath which the hearts of the most stubborn sinners quailed, one universal cry arose, "What must we do to be saved?" John Wesley's divine simple Scriptural answer was, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

His personal experience of the efficacy of the prescription gave confidence to his advice. The physician had been healed himself first: he had been his own earliest patient: he knew the bitterness of the pain, the virulence of the disease, and he had proved the sanative power of his remedy. The ordeal of the new birth he had tried before he recommended it to others. He had visited the pool of Bethesda, and could therefore speak well of its waters.

And well might it work such change to have the necessity of personal religion insisted upon with such unprecedented particularity and pointedness. He singled out each hearer; he allowed no evasion amid the multitude; he showed how salvation was not by a Church, nor by families, nor by ministers, nor by ordinances, nor by national communions, but by a deep singular individual experience of religion in the soul. His address was framed upon the model of the Scripture query, "Dost *thou* believe upon the Son of God?"

A second truth developed in the ministry of John Wesley, is the absolute need of spiritual influence to secure the conversion of the soul. Conversion is not a question of willing or not willing on the part of man: the soul bears no resemblance to the muscles of the healthy arm, which the mere will to straighten and stiffen throws into a state of rigid tension at the instant, and retains them so at pleasure. The soul is in the craze and wreck of paralysis: the power of action does not respond to the will: the whole head is sick, the heart faint. To will is present with us, but how to perform that which is good we know not. The sick man would be well, but the wish is unavailing till the simple, the leech, and the blessing of the Most

High conspire to invigorate. Just so is it with the soul; it must tarry till it be endued with power from on high, but not, be it understood, in the torpor of apathy, nor in the slough of despair; no, but wishing, watching, waiting. Though its search were as fruitless as that of Diogenes, it must be seeking nevertheless, just as, though the prophet's commission be to preach to the dead, he must not dispute nor disobey. We must strive to enter in although the gate be strait and the way narrow: we must be feeling after God, if haply we may find him, though it be amid the darkness of nature and the tremblings of dismay. We may scarce have ability to repent after a godly sort, yet ought we to bring forth "fruits meet for repentance." With God alone may rest the prerogative to pronounce us "sons of Abraham," yet, like Zaccheus, must we work the works becoming that relation, and right the wronged and feed the poor. While, then, we emphatically announce the doctrine that the influence of the Holy Ghost is necessary to quicken, renew, and purify the soul, we do at the same time repudiate the principle that man may fold his hands in sleep till the divine voice arouse him. Nothing short of a celestial spark can ignite the fire of our sacrifice, but we can at least lay the wood upon the altar. None but the Lord of the kingdom can admit to the privilege of the kingdom, but at the same time it is well to make inquiry of him who keeps the door. John was only the bridegroom's friend, the herald of better things to come; yet "Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," did but its duty in flocking to him to hear his tidings, and learn where to direct its homage. To endangered men the night was given for far other uses than for sleep: the storm is high and the rocks

are near, the sails are rent, and the planks are starting beneath the fury of the winds and waves,—what is the dictate of wisdom, of imperious necessity? what but to ply the pump, to undergird the ship, to strike the mast; haul taut the cordage, “strengthen the things that remain,” and trust in the Most High. If safety is vouchsafed, it is God who saves. So in spiritual things man must strive as if he could do everything, and trust as if he could do nothing; and in regeneration the Scripture doctrine is that he can do nothing. He may accomplish things leading thereto, just as the Jews ministered to the resurrection of Lazarus by leading Christ to the sepulchre; but it was the divine voice that raised the dead. Thus sermons, Scriptures, catechisms, and all the machinery of Christian action, will be tried and used, dealt out by the minister and shared by his flock; but with each and all must the conviction rest that it is not by might of mechanism, nor by power of persuasion conversion is brought about, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.

This truth was grievously lost sight of in Wesley’s days, sunk in the tide of cold morality that inundated the land and consigned it to a theosophy less spiritual than that of Socrates or Plato. But up from the depths of the heathenish flood our great reformer fished this imperishable truth, a treasure-trove exceeding in value pearls of great price, or a navy of sunken galleons. And through his ministry this shone with unequalled light, for if anything distinguished it more than another from contemporary ministries, it was the emphatic prominence it assigned to the Spirit’s work in conversion. This was the Pharos of his teaching, the luminous point which led the world-lost soul into the haven of assured peace and conscious adoption.

And much need was there that this dogma should have received this distinctive preëminence and peculiar honour, for it was either totally forgotten, coarsely travestied, or boldly denied.

Having now dealt with the truths that bear upon personal religion and individual subjection to the truth, as well as the means whereby this was to be effected—the direct agency of the Divine Spirit, things insisted upon with untiring energy by John Wesley—we now turn attention to the views which our great reformer put forth regarding Christians in their associated capacity. He knew full well, none better than he, that the individual believer is not a unit, an isolation, a monad, complete in his own sufficiency, spinning round himself like a top upon its peg, rejoicing in the music of its complacent hum; no, but a joint in a system, a member of a body, a fraction of a whole, a segment of an orb, which, incomplete without its parts, becomes only by their adhesion terse and rotund. Every portion of the Christian community, like every portion of the body politic, is related to every other portion. When a man becomes a Christian he is inducted into a fraternity, made free of a sodality and guild, with the interests of which he becomes so intimately bound up that his pulse dances in its health and languishes in its decay. The figure of Scripture becomes experimental truth: “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” 1 Cor. xii, 26. He is disjoined from his former association with worldly men; the bad blood of his unconverted alliances is drawn off and that of a new fellowship infused, and he becomes a member of its body, of its flesh, and of its bones. A homogeneity is established

between himself and all the other parts of this spiritual incorporation; and while in matters of faith, obedience, and personal responsibility he retains his individual manhood, in all that affects the fortunes and duties of the Church he thrills with a quick sympathy as the remotest nerve will with the brain. And this corporate life he only lives, enjoys its advantages, and answers its ends, while he lives in conjunction, in observance of divine ordinances and visible worship, with men like-minded with himself, the regenerate sons of God. For developing this feature of the Christian life Wesley made provision in the arrangements of his system, and this he did by prominently recognising this further third principle, namely:—

That the Church of Jesus Christ is a spiritual organization consisting of spiritual men associated for spiritual purposes.

This is the theory of that Church of which he was for several years the laborious and conscientious minister, and is nowhere more happily expressed than in its nineteenth article:—"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." But this beautiful and Scriptural theory was, to a great degree, an unapproachable ideal in this country until that system arose, under the creative hand of Wesley, which made it a reality and gave it a positive existence, "a local habitation and a name." It is true the name he gave it was not Church, it was The Society, and in other forms and subdivisions, bands, classes, &c., but in essence it was the same; it was the union and communion of the Lord's people for

common edification and the glory of Christ. As soon as two or three converts were made to those earnest personal views of religion he promulgated, the inclination and necessity for association commenced. It was seen in his Oxford praying coterie; seen in his fellowship with the Moravians; and afterward fully exemplified in the mother society at the Foundry, Moorfields, and in all the affiliated societies throughout the kingdom. The simple object of these associations was thus explained in a set of general rules for their governance, published by the brothers Wesley in 1743. The preamble states the nature and design of a Methodist Society to be "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation. There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies—a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." They were further to evidence this desire:—"1. By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind. 2. By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men. And, 3. By attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded; the supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting or abstinence." Whether we regard the design of association given in these terms, or the specification of duty, we seem to trace a virtual copy of the articular definition of the Church recently cited. Wesley never failed to recognise the Scriptural



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distinction between the Church and the world, nor to mark it. While he viewed with becoming deference the kingdoms of this world, and bowed to the authority of the magistrate as the great cement of human society, the clamp that binds the stones of the edifice together, he saw another kingdom pitched within the borders of these, differing from them in everything and infinitely above them, yet consentaneous with them, and vesting them with its sanction, itself all the while purely spiritual in its basis, laws, privileges, and sovereign. Blind must he have been to a degree incompatible with his general perspicacity, had he not perceived this. The men who possessed religion, and the men who possessed it not, were not to be for a moment confounded. They might be neighbours in locality and friends in good-will; but they were wide as the poles asunder in sentiment. The quick and the dead may be placed side by side, but no one can for ever so short a period mistake dead flesh for living fibre, the abnegation of power for energy in repose. The church and the churchyard are close by; but the worshippers in the one and the dwellers in the other are as unlike as two worlds can make them. The circle within the circle, the company of the converted, the *imperium in imperio*, the elect, the regenerate, Wesley always distinguished from the mass of mankind, and made special provision for their edification in all his organisms.

And in sooth the marked and constant recognition of this spiritual incorporation it is which gives revealed religion its only chance of survival in the world. To forget it is practically to abolish the distinction between error and truth, between right and wrong. There is no heresy more destructive than a bad life. To class the man

of good life and the man of bad together,—to call them by the same name and elevate them to the same standing, is high treason against the majesty of truth, poisons the very spring of morality, and does conscience to death. A nation cannot be a Church, nor a Church a nation. The case of Israel was the only one in which the two kingdoms were coëxtensive, conterminous. A member of a nation a man becomes by birth, but a member of a Church only by a second birth. Generation is his title to the one, regeneration to the other. The one is a natural accident, the other a moral state. Citizens are the sons of the soil, Christians are the sons of heaven. To clothe, then, the members of the one with the livery and title of the other without the prerequisite qualification and dignity, is not only a solecism in language, but an outrage upon truth. It is to reconcile opposites, harmonize discords, blend dissimilarities, and identify tares with wheat, light with darkness, life with death. It is the destruction of piety among the converted, for they see the unconverted honoured with their designation, advanced to their level, obtruded upon their society. It is ruin to the souls of the unconverted, because without effort of their own, without faith, or prayer, or good works, or reformation, or morals, they are surprised with the style and title, the status and rewards of Christian men. This is unfortunately the practice on a large scale; the theory is otherwise and unexceptionable. Imbued with a deep sense of the beauty and correctness of the theory, Wesley did only what was natural and right when he sought to make it a great fact—a substance and not a shadow—in the Church militant. In this he not only obeyed a divine injunction, but yielded to the current of events. By a natural attraction his converts

were drawn together. Like will to like. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another;" and "all that believed were together." The particles were similar, the aggregate homogeneous. They had gone through the same throes, rejoiced in the same parentage, learned in the same school, and embraced the same destiny. They owned a common creed, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all;" resisted a common temptation, took up a common cross, and in common renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil. They came together on the ground of identity of character, of desire for mutual discipline and benefit, and of community of feeling and interest. It is obvious to perceive that Wesley did not originate this communion, whether it were for good or evil; for it was an ordinance of God in its primal institution, and in this particular instance arose out of the very nature of the case. Wesley could not have prevented it, except by such measures as would have undone all he had done. God's believing people found one another out, and associated by a law as fixed and unalterable as that kali and acid coalesce, or that the needle follows the magnet. But while he did not enact the law which God's people obeyed in this close intercommunion and relationship, he understood and revered it, and furthered and regulated the intercourse of the godly by the various enactments and graduated organizations of his system. He set the city upon the hill, and bade it be conspicuous; the lamp upon the stand, and bade it shine; the vine upon the soil, and said to it, Be fruitful. He set it apart, and trimmed it, and hedged it in; convinced that such separation as Scripture enjoins (2 Cor. vi) was essential to its growth and welfare—a truth the Christian law teaches and indi-

vidual experience confirms. Every benefit the institution of a Church might be supposed to secure is forfeited when the Church loses its distinctive character and becomes identified with the world.

But neither to glorify their founder by their closer combination, nor for self-complacent admiration, nor to be a gazing-stock for the multitude—an ecclesiastical lion of formidable dimensions and portentous roar—nor for the tittle tattle of mutual gossipry did John Wesley segregate his people; no, but for their good and the good of mankind. The downy bed of indolence for the Church, or the obesity that grows of inaction, never once came within his calculations as their lot. To rub the rust from each other, as iron sharpeneth iron, was the first object of their association; and the second to weld their forces together in the glowing furnace of communion for the benefit of the world. They were to rejoice in the good grapes of their own garden, and sweeten by inoculation and culture the sour grapes of their neighbour. They were to attract all goodness to themselves, and where it was wanting create it, after the Arab proverb, “The palm-tree looks upon the palm-tree and groweth fruitful!” It was as the salt of the earth they were to seek to retain their savour, and not for their own preservation alone. No one ever more sedulously guarded the inward subjective aspect of the Church, its self-denying intent, its exclusion of the unholy and unclean, than John Wesley; and no one ever directed its objective gaze outward and away from itself, “to have compassion on the ignorant and out of the way,” with more untiring industry than he. He knew the Church’s mission was more than half unfulfilled, while it locked itself up in its ark of security, and left the world without

to perish. He was himself the last man in the world to leave the wounded to die, passing by in his superciliousness, and asking, "Who is my neighbour?" and the last to found a community which should be icy, selfish, and unfeeling. He was a working minister, and fathomed the depth and yielded to the full current of the truth, that the Church must be a working Church. Armed at all points with sympathies which brought him into contact with the world without, the Church must resemble him in this. He was an utterly unselfish being; he, if ever any, could say—

"I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me."

To work for the benefit of men when he might have taken his ease, became a necessity of his nature, moulded upon the pattern of his self-sacrificing Master, and the law of his being must be that of the Church's. It must "do or die." It must be instant in season, out of season. It must go into the highways and hedges. It must beseech men to be reconciled to God. It must compel them to come in. It must give no sleep to its eyes, nor slumber to its eyelids, till its work be done. It must stand in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths, and cry, "O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart!" It must gather all the might of its energies, and lavish all the wealth of its resources, and exhaust all the influences it can command, and coin all the ingenuity of its devices into schemes for the saving benefit of the world. Thus not merely conservative of the truth must the Church be for its own edification and nurture, but also diffusive of the truth for the renewal and redemption of all around.

And these were grand discoveries a hundred years ago, of which the credit rests very mainly with the founder of Methodism, although mere common-places now. It is true they were partially and speculatively held even then; but very partially, and in the region of thought rather than of action. Some saw the truth of the matter, but it was in its proverbial dwelling, and the well was deep, just perceptible at the bottom, but beyond their grasp; while to the many the waters were muddy, and they saw it not at all. There were no Bible, Tract, or Missionary Societies then to employ the Church's powers and indicate its path of duty. But Wesley started them all. He wrote and printed and circulated books in thousands upon thousands of copies. He set afloat home and foreign missions. The Church and the world were alike asleep; he sounded the loud trumpet of the gospel, and awoke the world to tremble and the Church to work. Never was such a scene before in England. The correctness and maturity of his views amid the deep darkness surrounding him is startling, wonderful, like the idea of a catholic Church springing up amid a sectarian Judaism. It is midday without the antecedent dawn. It beggars thought. It defies explanation. A Church in earnest as a want of the times is, even now in these greatly advanced days, strenuously demanded and eloquently enforced by appeal after appeal from the press, the platform, and the pulpit; but Wesley gave it practical existence from the very birth-hour of his society. His vigorous bantling rent the swathing bands of quiet, self-communing, and prevalent custom, and gave itself a young Hercules to the struggle with the inertia of the Church and the opposition of the world. Successfully it encountered both. It quickened the one and subdued the

other, and attained by the endeavour the muscular development and manful port and indomitable energy of its present life. John Wesley's Church is no mummy chamber of a pyramid—silent, sepulchral, garnished with still figures in hieroglyphic coif and cerecloth, but a busy town, a busier hive, himself the informing spirit, the parent energy, the exemplary genius of the whole. Never was the character of the leader more accurately reflected in his troops. Bonaparte made soldiers, Wesley made active Christians.

The last principle we shall notice as illustrated by his career has relation to the nature and work of the ministry.

A grand discovery lying very near the root of Methodism, considered as an ecclesiastical system, it was the fortune of John Wesley to light upon, not far from the outset of his career, a discovery quite as momentous and influential in the diffusion and perpetuation of his opinions as that with which Luther startled the world in 1524. Luther published the then monstrous heresy that ministers who are married can serve the Lord and his Church as holily, learnedly, and acceptably as celibate priests and cloistered regulars; and our hero found out that men unqualified by university education for orders in the Church were the very fittest instruments he could employ in the itinerant work of early Methodism. Rough work requires rough hands. The burly pioneer is as needful in the army as the dapper ensign, and the hewer of wood in the deep forest as the French-polisher in the city. Now this was a great discovery, up to that period a thing unknown. The Roman Church knew nothing of such a device—its orders of various kinds bore no approximation to it; the Protestant Churches knew nothing of it—presbyter and bishop

were at equal removes from it; the very puritans and non-conformists knew nothing of it, they being in their way as great sticklers for clerical order and their succession as any existing body—the more pardonable, as some were living in the early part of Wesley's history who had themselves officiated in the Churches of the Establishment. His discovery was, that plain men just able to read, and explain with some fluency what they read and felt, might go forth without license from college, or presbytery, or bishop, into any parish in the country, the weaver from his loom, the shoemaker from his stall, and tell their fellow-sinners of salvation and the love of Christ. This was a tremendous innovation upon the established order of things everywhere, and was as reluctantly forced upon so starched a precisian as John Wesley, as it must have horrified the members of the stereotyped ministries and priesthoods existing around. But, as in Luther's case, so here—"the present necessity" was the teacher: "the fields were white to the harvest, and the labourers were few." We have ample evidence to show that if he could have pressed into the service a sufficient number of the clerical profession he would have preferred the employment of such agents exclusively, but as they were only few of this rank who lent him their constant aid, he was driven to adopt the measure which we think the salvation of his system, and in some respects its glory. The greater part of the clergy would have been unfitted for the work he would have allotted them, even had they not been hampered by the trammels of ecclesiastical usage. This usage properly assigns a fixed portion of clerical labour to one person, and to discharge it well is quite enough to tax the powers of most men to the utmost. Few parish

ministers, how conscientious and diligent so ever, will ever have to complain of too little to do. But Wesley had a roving commission, was an "individuum vagum," as one of the clergy called him, and felt himself called by his strong sense of the need of some extraordinary means to awaken the sleeping population of the country to overleap the barriers of clerical courtesy and ecclesiastical law, invading parish after parish of recusant incumbents without compunction or hesitancy at the overweening impulse of duty. However much some clergymen may have sympathized with him in religious opinion, it is easy to understand how many natural and respectable scruples might prevent their following such a leader in his Church errantry. They must, in fact, have broken with their own system to give themselves to his, and this they might not be prepared to do. They might value his itinerating plan as supplementary to the localized labours of the parish minister, but at the same time demur to its taking the place of parochial duty as its tendency was and as its effect has been. Thus was Wesley early thrown upon a species of agency for help which he would doubtless sincerely deplore at first, namely, a very slenderly equipped but zealously ardent and fearless laity, but which, again, his after experience led him to value at its proper worth, and see in the adaptation of his men to the common mind their highest qualification. "Fire low" is said to have been his frequent charge in after life to young ministers, a maxim the truth of which was confirmed by the years of an unusually protracted ministry and acquaintance with mankind. A ministry that dealt in perfumed handkerchiefs, and felt most at home in Bond-street and the ball-room, the perfumed popinjays of their profession; or one

that, emulous of the fame of Nimrod, that mighty hunter before the Lord, sacrificed clerical duty to the sports of the field, prized the reputation of securing the brush before that of being a good shepherd of the sheep, and deemed the music of the Tally-ho or Hunting Chorus infinitely more melodious than the Psalms of David; or, again, one composed of the fastidious student of over-refined sensibilities, better acquainted with the modes of thought of past generations than with the actual habits of the present, delicate recluses and nervous men, the bats of society, who shrink from the sunshine of busy life into the congenial twilight of their library, whose over-educated susceptibilities would prompt the strain—

“O lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed!”

these would have utterly failed for the work John Wesley wanted them to do. Gentlemen would either to a great degree have wanted those sympathies that should exist between the shepherd and the flock, or would have quailed before the rough treatment the first preachers were called to endure. Although the refinement of a century has done much to crush the coarser forms of persecution, it must not be forgotten that the early ministers of Methodism were called to encounter physical quite as frequently as logical argumentation. The middle terms of the syllogisms they were treated to were commonly the middle of the horsepond, and their Sorites the dungheap. Now the plain men whom Wesley was so fortunate as to enlist in his cause were those whose habits of daily life and undisputing faith in the truth of their system qualified them to “endure hardness as good soldiers.” They were

not over refined for intercourse with rude, common people, could put up with the coarsest fare in their mission to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the poorest of the poor, and were not to be daunted by the perspective of rotten eggs and duckings, of brickbats and mandamuses, which threatened to keep effectually in abeyance any temptation to incur the woe when all men should speak well of them. Hence among the first coadjutors of the great leader were John Nelson, a stone-mason; Thomas Olivers, a shoemaker; William Hunter, a farmer; Alexander Mather, a baker; Peter Jaco, a Cornish fisherman; Thomas Hanby, a weaver, &c.

Another point in regard to the ministry to which Wesley gave habitual prominence, was the duty of making that profession a laborious calling. The heart and soul of his system, as of his personal ministry, he made to be work. Work was the mainspring of his Methodism, activity, energy, progression. From the least to the largest wheel within wheel that necessity created, or his ingenuity set up, all turned, wrought, acted incessantly and intelligently too. It was not mere machinery; it was full of eyes. To the lowest agent of Methodism, be it collector, contributor, exhorter, or distributor of tracts, each has, besides the faculty of constant occupation, the ability to render a reason for what he does. Work and wisdom are in happy combination—at least, such was the purpose of the contriver, and we have reason to believe has been in a fair proportion secured. And the labour that marks the lower, marks preëminently the higher departments of the system. The ministry beyond all professions demands labour. He who seeks a cure that it may be a sinecure, or a benefice which shall be a benefit to himself alone—who expects to

find the ministry a couch of repose instead of a field for toil—a bread-winner rather than a soul-saver by means of painful watchings, fastings, toils, and prayers—has utterly mistaken its nature, and is unworthy of its honour. It is a stewardship, a husbandry, an edification, a warfare, demanding the untiring effort of the day and unslumbering vigilance of the night to fulfil its duties and secure its reward. It is well to remember that the slothful and the wicked servant are conjoined in the denunciation of the indignant master—“Thou wicked and slothful servant!”

Where there may be sufficient lack of principle to prompt to indolence and self-indulgence, there are few communions which will not present the opportunity to the sluggish or sensual minister. But the Methodist mode of operations is better calculated than perhaps almost any other for checking human corruption when developing itself in this form. The ordinary amount of official duty required of the travelling preachers is enough to keep both the reluctant and the willing labourer fully employed.

And Mr. Wesley exacted no more of others than he cheerfully and systematically rendered himself, daily labour even to weariness being the habit of his life.

He was the prince of missionaries, however humble his self-estimate might be, the prime apostle of Christendom since Luther; his preëminent example too likely to be lost sight of in this missionary age, when the Church, in the bustle of its present activities, has little time to cherish recollections of its past worthies, or to speculate with clearness on the shapes of its future calling and destiny. But in one sense he was more than an apostle. By miracle they were qualified with the gift of tongues for missions

to men of strange speech; but Wesley did not shrink from the toil of acquiring language after language, in order to speak intelligibly on the subject of religion to foreigners. The Italian he acquired that he might minister to a few Vaudois; the German, that he might converse with Moravians; and the Spanish, for the benefit of some Jews among his parishioners. Such rare parts, and zeal, and perseverance, and learning, are seldom combined in any living man: we have never seen nor heard of any one like Wesley in the capacity and liking for labour; we indulge, therefore, very slender hopes of encountering such a one in the remaining space of our pilgrimage. In our sober judgment, it were as sane to expect the buried majesty of Denmark to revisit the glimpses of the moon as hope to find all the conditions presented in John Wesley show themselves again in England. We may not look upon his like again. His labours in a particular department—that of preaching—astound from their magnitude; although these, far from being the sum total of his occupations, were but a fraction of a vast whole, and a sample of the rest. During fifty-two years, according to his biographers, he generally delivered two sermons a day, very frequently four or five. Calculating, therefore, at twice a day, and allowing fifty sermons annually for extraordinary occasions, which is the lowest computation that can be made, the whole number in fifty-two years will be forty thousand four hundred and sixty. To these may be added an infinite number of exhortations to the societies after preaching, and other occasional meetings at which he assisted. Add to these his migrations and journeyings to and fro, and none can say that his life was not well filled up. In his younger days he travelled on horseback, and was a

hard but unskilful rider. With a book held up before his eyes by both hands, and the rein dropped on the horse's neck, he often travelled as much as fifty, sixty, or even seventy miles a day; from the quickness of his pace and unguardedness of his horsemanship, endangering his own and the good steed's limbs by frequent falls. At a later period he used a carriage. Of his travels the lowest calculation we can make is four thousand miles annually, which, in fifty-two years, will give two hundred and eight thousand miles; that is, if he had ridden eight times round the globe on which we dwell, he would have had a handsome surplus of miles remaining to have done his achievement into Irish measure. Of the salutary effect of these abundant labours upon his frame we have his personal testimony at a very advanced age. His was a "*cruda viridisque senectus*" to the last, and he himself a memorable instance of the worth of the OPEN-AIR-AND-HARD-WORK-CURE, a process of more certain value and ready application at all times than hydropathy, homœopathy, or any of the thousand quackeries of the present day.

In person he was small, and, when seen in company with his friends, appeared almost unusually so. An engraving is extant which thus pictures him walking with Hamilton and Cole. It is amazing that so slight a frame, shaken as it had been by early pulmonary attacks, could have endured such incessant exposure and labour. To seek to delineate the more subtile lines or delicate shades of his character, our purpose forbids. The time and space would be wanting, while there is no lack of liking for the task. We shall therefore confine our further remarks to an illustration of what we conceive to be the



WESLEY, HAMILTON, AND COLE,
(As seen walking in the streets of Edinburgh.)



leading traits of John Wesley's character, never so specified that we are aware of before, yet lying so palpably on the surface, that they have only to be named to be recognised. Without the preëminent qualities in question, no one was ever great and good; and as we have no scruple in calling him great and good beyond easy comparison, so are these qualities to be found developed in him to an unusual degree. They made him what he became, the successful reformer of his age, and one of England's noblest worthies, while his system will make him a benefactor to millions yet unborn.

The distinctive features of character we unhesitatingly ascribe to him, are an indomitable firmness, and a boundless benevolence. John Wesley was a man in a singular measure *tenax propositi*. Where he thought himself certainly right, nothing on earth could move him. In all such cases this quality is a great virtue, but in cases of a different complexion it is a great fault. In questions of doubtful propriety and prudence it will bear the ugly names of obstinacy and self-will. But, stigmatize it as we please, there never was a great man without a strong will, and an infusion of self-reliance sufficient to raise him above the dauntings of opposition and reliance upon props. It is a heritable quality, as transmissible from father to son, as the sage or "foolish face." Wesley certainly derived it from his parents. The daughter of the eminent non-conformist rector of Cripplegate, Dr. Annesley, who at thirteen years of age had studied the state Church controversy, and made up her mind, with force of reason too, to condemn her father's decision, and take her place for life on the other side, cannot be supposed to have been wanting in firmness; who, further, would never

renounce her Jacobite respect for the *jus divinum* of the Stuart kings, nor say amen to her husband's prayers for him of the Revolution, nor bow beneath the thousand ills of her married life, and pursued the onward, even, and unwearied tenor of her way, undismayed by censure, uncrushed by poverty and domestic cares, unchanging and unchanged to the last, could not be wanting in it. Nor was the sire less endowed with it, though there was more of petulance and human passion in its display in him. The man whose whole life was a perpetual struggle with circumstances and war with opinions, and a series of ill-rewarded efforts—the wight who stole away from the dissenting academy, whence they sohoed him in vain, and without consulting friend or relative, tramped it to Oxford, and entered himself a penniless servitor; who afterward, a right loyal but very threadbare clergyman, rode off in a huff from his wife, nor rejoined her for a twelvemonth, till the death of King William released him from his sturdily kept but unrighteous vow—who “fought with wild beasts” for high Church of the highest order, and shrank from no cuffs he caught in such a cause; and who, when his “Job” was consumed in the fire that burnt his parsonage, sat down to renew the labour of years, and recompose and rewrite his learned Latin folio:—these are so many indications of indomitable firmness, that we should be blind as moles to overlook its presence in his character. John Wesley had the same unbending sinew. He too was made of stern unpliant stuff, and to drive the Tiber back to its sources were as easy a task as to turn him back from a course deliberately chosen with the approval of his judgment. Opponents, strong and numerous enough, he had to encounter, to justify concession, had he been so

disposed, nor was reason always so visibly on his side but he might have paused. We shall name an occasion or two such as rarely occur in the life of a good man, which signalized the lordliness of his will, and proved him to be endowed with a rare determination. We omit the ridicule and minor persecutions provoked by the religious singularities of his early career, as not sufficient to turn even an aspen-minded man who had any earnest devotion about him, from his way, and note his first most trying decision—that by which he was led to renounce his father's living.

Shortly before his father's decease, it occurred to the head of the family, looking anxiously forward to its fortunes, and those of his parish, how desirable it would be that his son John should succeed him in his cure, at once for the perpetuation of the religious care he had exercised over his parishioners, and that his wife and daughters might retain their accustomed home at the parsonage. Here was every consideration to move a susceptible man—regard for souls, veneration for a parent in the ministry, respect for hoar hairs grown gray in the service of the Church, and Christian and family ties of more than ordinary strength—all put before him in a strain of uncommon force and pathos by his father in his final appeal.

But none of these things moved our hero. He was devout, affectionate, and filial, but firm; so notoriously so, that his elder brother Samuel, writing to him on the subject in December, 1734, says: "Yesterday I received a letter from my father, wherein he tells me you are unalterably resolved not to accept of a certain living if you could get it. After this declaration I believe no one can move your mind but Him who made it." The question was, in

fact, decided, and he was not to be shaken from his determination, the ground of decision being not the comparative merits of Epworth and Oxford, as fields of usefulness, but something more exclusively personal. He felt as many a man in earnest about salvation has felt before and since, that the care of his own soul is of prime importance, and must be especially regarded in every measure we adopt; that the neglect of self is ill compensated by saving benefit to others, or any advantage of an earthly kind. For reasons given with great length and clearness, in a letter to his father, he concluded a continued residence at Oxford essential to his soul's peace and welfare. "The point is," he says, "whether I shall or shall not work out my salvation, whether I shall serve Christ or Belial." The semi-monastic life of the university was essential to the very life of piety in his heart according to his views at that juncture; therefore Epworth, with its long list of prudential make-weights, kicked the beam.

And Wesley was humanly right. His personal relation to eternity outweighed all other considerations to his awakened soul. He felt, as few men feel, how solemn a thing it is to die. His resolution was based upon the sentiment of his own hymn in after days:—

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky."

And Wesley was divinely right. If ever the Spirit of God had to do with the moral movements of men, its operation is discernible in this case. It was of infinite moment to the world that Wesley's decision should have been what it was, and of equal moment to his own peace

of conscience that it should have been correct. The mode in which he viewed the question sets him right in the court of conscience, and the results that followed justified his decision. His father would have involved him in a maze of nice casuistry—puzzled him by a complex tangle of motives and influences—but wiser than he, and more free from bias, the son looks at it in the simple, proper light, that of duty, and gives utterance to the following sentiments, which are sublimely true:—

“I do not say that the glory of God is to be my first, or my principal consideration, but my only one: since all that are not implied in this are absolutely of no weight; in presence of this they all vanish away, they are less than the small dust of the balance. And, indeed, till all other considerations were set aside, I could never come to any clear determination; till my eye was single my whole body was full of darkness. Every consideration distinct from this threw a shadow over all the objects I had in view, and was such a cloud as no light could penetrate. Whereas, so long as I can keep my eye single, and steadily fixed on the glory of God, I have no more doubt of the way wherein I should go, than of the shining of the sun at noon-day.”

Well said, clear head, and stoutly done, brave heart, though there were natural yearnings and fond misgivings in thy way! In questions of duty thou didst clearly see duty alone is to be consulted. Thou didst not confer with flesh and blood; these had crushed thy conscience, and warped thy will, and reversed thy decision. Thou didst take the matter to the infallible oracle, Him that sitteth upon the throne; like Hezekiah thou didst lay it upon the altar of the Most High, and tremulously say, “that which

I know not teach thou me," and thou wert rewarded with a divine intimation, "This is the way!" Thou didst thus hate thy father and thy mother and thy house, and take up thy cross for Christ's sake and the gospel's; but thy more than natural, thy Christian firmness, reaped its recompense even here, for thou receivedst a hundredfold now, even in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children, and long since, in heaven, eternal life. Stoic fortitude, Roman daring, hide your heads before such firmness as this. Epictetus is a jest, and Regulus, "*egregius exul*," a fable, when compared with this plain narrative of modern heroism. Here, however, was one of the leading features of John Wesley's character, broadly portrayed, deeply coloured, boldly thrown up from the canvass, and giving happy omen of his future career.

The firmness which marked his decision here, the same which forbade discouragement and retractation at Oxford, where, after a short absence, he found his flock of twenty-seven persons reduced to five, and which made him resist the authorities at Georgia, was peculiarly shown in his relations to the Church of England throughout his life. In the line of remarks this topic opens, we shall describe simply the facts of the case, and neither apologize for Wesley nor condemn the Church. He was never a Dissenter in his own view of the word, and never wished his followers to be. Nevertheless there is a prevailing order in the proceedings of every community, and this order, in his own Church, he did not hesitate to disturb, at the instance of what he deemed sufficiently valid reasons. Whatever his followers may urge in defence of his measures, they were obviously at odds with ecclesiastical order.

We have a very remarkable conversation of John Wesley with the Bishop of Bristol, in the year 1739, on the subject of justification by faith, in which, after disposing of that topic, Wesley's proceedings are canvassed;—the whole going in proof of two things: the one how careful he was in the outset of his career to encroach as little as possible upon canonical order; and the other, that at the call of apprehended duty he was prepared to go any lengths in violation of it.

The history of Wesley's relations to the Established Church is traced with elaborate skill in a series of papers in the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine" for 1829, to which we must refer our readers, and one sentence alone from which we will extract:—"While his attachment to the Church was truly conscientious, equally so was his determination to innovate as Providence should direct him. His language equally with his actions indicated the self-impelling convictions of the Reformer." This is just the philosophy of the case as clearly put by the author, and felt by Mr. Wesley. But so completely had the venerable leader of the movement habituated himself to the independent action of his society that nothing could have been more in accordance with the current of his life, principles, and anticipations, (see "Minutes of Conference" for 1744,) nor more certainly have secured his approval, than the distinctive position this body has since taken up, neither controlled by the Church of England nor hostile to it. That body seems to have embodied in the happiest way the spirit and pattern of its founder, when it defined its general policy toward the Establishment in the following terms:—"Methodism exists in a friendly relation with the Establishment. In all its official writings and sanc-

tioned publications, though often called to defend itself against intemperate clergymen, it treats the Church itself with respect and veneration, and cordially rejoices in the advance of its religious character and legitimate moral influence."

In the unbending firmness of our hero we see much of the gracious man,—the man whose heart is established with grace,—but we see also in it largely the man John Wesley. We fancy we perceive in it no less somewhat of the sturdiness of the national character. John Bull will not be badgered and brow-beaten any more than he will be coaxed and cajoled into what his strong determination opposes; and Wesley, in his nervous English, his practical wisdom, his steady good sense, and his unconquerable will, displayed some of the most respectable and salient points of the Saxon character, belonging by unmistakable evidence to that family of the Bulls, which, notwithstanding all its faults, has no few qualities to admire. There is in his rigid firmness, moreover, something of his puritan ancestry, one point at least in which Bishop Warburton was right. His blood was vitiated with their stubborn humour, if it be a vice. He belonged to the tribe of Ishmael by both father's and mother's side at a single remove, and he could not be expected to turn out other than he did. But we pause. John Wesley was frank, generous, open, simple as a child; confiding, plastic, and persuasible where a man had right upon his side, but where himself was right he was positive—to a fault?—no, to perfection; and it had been a less miracle to move a mountain into the sea than to move him from his purpose. This goes far to explain the man and his work. To no one was Regent Murray's saying at

the grave of John Knox ever more applicable than to our intrepid modern John:—

“There lies one who never feared the face of man.”

Unbounded benevolence was another leading *trait* in his character. This was the basis of his life, the spring of his self-denial and his labours. A recluse at Oxford, musty folios and metaphysics could not extinguish the smouldering fire within—

“He thought as a sage, but he felt as a man.”

Afterward the fire burst forth; he kindled as he flew over the world, a flaming seraph of mercy to mankind.

At the University his benevolence led him into frightful prisons and condemned cells, into hospital and lazaret-house; from the society of the common-room and beloved books to converse with felons and miserable sufferers. It curtailed his bread and his dress, it debarred him of the comfort of a well-shorn head, it led to a course of self-sacrifice and effort for the benefit of the wretched and the sinful, which put his sincerity sorely to the test, and lasted with his life. His heart bled for the world; he saw sin bursting out in blotches of sorrow all over the face of society, and he longed to purify, console, and heal. He could not look upon men drawn unto death and ready to be slain without attempting their rescue. He saw no hope for their bodies or their souls but in the labours and voluntary gifts of Christians for their salvation. He felt for their fate; but, eminently practical, he felt in bed and board, in clothing and comfort. His was sumptuary sensibility more than tearful, active compassion rather than passive. Merely because more easy of illustration, and not for a

moment putting it in comparison with the ardour of his soul to do good, we adduce his monetary benevolence in proof of our point—a benevolence which would give all, do all, reserve nothing, provided it could but win a revenue of glory to God and happiness to wretched men. Never did any man part with money more freely. His charities knew no limit but his means. He gave away all that he had beyond bare provision for his present wants. He began this procedure early, and never left off till he had done with earth. In his first year at college he received £30, and making £28 suffice for his necessities, he gave away in charities £2. The next year he received £60, but still making £28 meet his expenditure, he gave away £32. The third year he received £90 and gave away £62. His receipts in the fourth year increased by the same sum as before, and out of £120 he gave away all but his primitive £28. And thus he acted through life, having given away in charities, it is believed, as much as £30,000, without a moment's thought for himself, his hands open as day, his heart the dwelling-place of kindness. His generous and unstinted liberality finds its most convincing proof in his circumstances at death. He had often and publicly declared that his own hands should be his executors, and that if he died worth £10 beyond the value of his books and other inconsiderable items, he would give the world leave to call him a thief and a robber. He made all he could, and his publications were numerous and profitable; he saved all he could, not wasting so much as a sheet of paper; and then he gave all he could, with an angel's sublime disregard of gold and silver and the wealth the world sets such store by. The notion that he must be enriching himself prevailed even among

those who ought to have known better. Need we wonder, then, that he received a letter from the Board of Excise telling him that the Commissioners could not doubt but that he had plate of which he had neglected to make entry, and requiring him immediately to send a proper return. The following was his answer:—"Sir, I have two silver teaspoons at London, and two at Bristol; this is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread. Your obedient servant, JOHN WESLEY." His chaise and horses, his clothes, and a few trifles of that kind, were all, his books excepted, that he left at his death. Thus he laid not up treasure upon earth, but in heaven, a good foundation against the time to come, that he might lay hold upon eternal life. Free from the love of money and the impulse of ambition, the two most ordinary motives of action among civilized men, what powerful principle sustained him in his life-long career of labour and endurance, self-denial and responsibility? One that never entered into the calculation of his unfriendly critics and biographers—a strong sense of duty springing from love to God. The stanza of the hymn so much upon his lips on his dying bed is the key that unlocks his heart, that opens up the mystery of a life otherwise inexplicable:—

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
 And when my voice is lost in death
 Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
 My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
 While life, and thought, and being last,
 Or immortality endures."

And when the daughters of music were brought low, and the death-rattle was heard in his throat, when lip and

limb were alike stiffening in the paralysis and collapse of death, the last feeble effort of his voice was put forth in syllabbling—

“I’ll praise—I’ll praise.”

Thus died John Wesley,—an end in harmony with his life. Our Euthanasia shapes itself into resemblance to his dismissal:—“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!”

But we cannot leave our subject even here without adverting to one of the finest forms in which the benevolence of this great man showed itself—one of the finest forms, in fact, which it can assume amid the war of parties and clash of religious discord—namely, his enlarged charity toward religionists of every name. We believe there is no instance on record in which he was the assailant, and that it was only when covered with the blackest aspersions affecting his character and creed that he came forth to make his modest and, in most cases, convincing apologies. The unmeasured invectives of many a Thersites both in the Church and in the world he met with the philosophic gentleness and gravity of a Ulysses. He seldom forgot in the heat of polemics what was due to himself as a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian.

His catholicity is seen in the constant object of his labours, which was not to raise a new sect among other sects, but to revive the languid spirit of religion in all, and especially in his own beloved Church. That ever his work and people took another direction was not owing to any crafty scheme, long a hatching in his own bosom, but to the bent of circumstances and the preference of the people themselves. He gave no countenance to prose-

lytism, and deprecated, at least, the name of separation. He never put his peculiar views above the fundamentals of the faith; nor, where the differences were the greatest between himself and others, did he for a moment forget that "charity which is the bond of perfectness." He believed that a strong vein of piety ran through the life and death of many Romanists, the monks of La Trappe, and Ignatius Loyola himself. He believed that Pelagius, the Montanists, and other early heretics, as they are called, might be wise and holy men despite their ignominious reputation; and while he vindicates the orthodoxy of Michael Servetus, has, in the same breath, a word of commendation for John Calvin: "I believe that Calvin was a great instrument of God; and that he was a wise and pious man." His enlarged charity deemed the heathen capable of eternal life, and opened heaven even to the brute creation. Wesley was a man to be loved. In these speculative views he may have been right or wrong; but they are an index to his soul, and prove that whatever else he may have been he was certainly not a narrow sectarist nor a cruel bigot. In all the atlases in his library there was not one little map devoted to a Methodist heaven. The distinctive point of his Arminian creed, that redemption is for the world, proves him to have been a person of large, generous, all-comprehending sympathy and love. His sentiments on ecclesiastical controversy are so apposite that we must do ourselves the pleasure of adducing them:—

"We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom; but if we die without love what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels! I will not quarrel with

you about any opinion; only see that your heart be right toward God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, that you love your neighbour, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions; I am weary to bear them; my soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me an humble and gentle lover of God and man, a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of. 'Whosoever *thus* doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.'"

And we add, capping this declaration with our heart's heartiest approval, let every one that readeth this say Amen. We regret that our space will not allow us to transfer to our pages the fine anecdote of the casual interview between the venerable Charles Simeon, then a young Calvinistic clergyman, and the aged apostle of Methodism, so creditable to the wisdom and piety of both. Our readers who may not be acquainted with it are referred to the Memoir of Simeon by Carus.

Unlike many, unlike most enduring celebrities, Wesley was successful, popular, appreciated during his lifetime, nor had to wait for posthumous praise. This was doubtless owing in part to the practical bent his genius took, which was calculated to win popular regard, but also to the unequalled excellence he displayed in the line he had chosen. The man who was known to have travelled more miles, preached more sermons, and published more books than any traveller, preacher, author, since the days of the

apostles, must have had much to claim the admiration and respect of his contemporaries. The man who exhibited the greatest disinterestedness all his life through, who has exercised the widest influence on the religious world, who has established the most numerous sect, invented the most efficient system of Church polity, who has compiled the best book of sacred song, and who has thus not only chosen eminent walks of usefulness, but in every one of them claims the first place, deserved to be regarded by them and by posterity as no common man.





REV. WILLIAM P. MEMORIE.

Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

William M'Kendree,

LATE SENIOR BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BISHOP M'KENDREE was born in King William County, Virginia, July 6, 1757. We know little of the events of his early life. He joined the patriots of the Revolution, and attained, it is said, the rank of adjutant in the army. During a season of remarkable religious interest in Virginia, in 1787, he became seriously concerned for his soul. Twelve hundred members were added to the Church on the Brunswick Circuit, which included the place of his residence, under the preaching of Rev. John Easter, a man of note in those days. M'Kendree, who had before been deeply impressed with religious convictions, says:—

“My convictions were renewed. They were deep and pungent. The great deep of the heart was broken up. Its deceit and desperately wicked nature was disclosed, and the awful, the eternally ruinous consequences, clearly appeared. My repentance was sincere. I became willing, and was desirous to be saved on any terms. After a sore and sorrowful travail of three days, which were employed in hearing Mr. Easter, and in fasting and prayer, while the man of God was showing a large congregation the way of salvation by faith, with a clearness which at once astonished and encouraged me, I ventured my all upon Christ.

In a moment my soul was relieved of a burden too heavy to be borne, and joy instantly succeeded sorrow. For a short space of time I was fixed in silent adoration, giving glory to God for his unspeakable goodness to such an unworthy creature."

From this happy change he passed on to higher experiences. The doctrine of entire sanctification was then preached, perhaps more faithfully than now, by our ministry. He received this great truth, and resolutely sought to attain its experimental knowledge. "Eventually," he writes, "I obtained deliverance from unholy passions, and found myself possessed of ability to resist temptation, to take up and bear the cross, and to exercise faith and patience, and all the graces of the Spirit in a manner before unknown."

He subsequently became impressed with the thought that it was his duty to enter the itinerant ministry. He hesitated, however, at the responsibility of the work. Conflicts profound and most harassing followed; at last, driven by his feelings, he visited his friend, Rev. Mr. Easter, and travelled some time the circuit with him; but again hesitating, he retreated to his home, resolved to resume his secular pursuits. He found no rest there, however, and finally gave himself to the Virginia Conference, and was appointed by Asbury to Mecklenburgh Circuit. He writes:

"I went immediately to the circuit to which I was appointed, relying more on the judgment of experienced ministers, in whom I confided, than on any clear conviction of my call to the work; and when I yielded to their judgment I firmly resolved not to deceive them, and to retire as soon as I should be convinced that I was not called of God, and to conduct myself in such a manner that, if I

failed, my friends might be satisfied it was not for want of effort on my part, but that their judgment was not well founded. This resolution supported me under many doubts and fears—for entering into the work of a travelling preacher neither removed my doubts nor the difficulties that attended my labours. Sustained by a determination to make a full trial, I resorted to fasting and prayer, and waited for those kind friends who had charge and government over me to dismiss me from the work. But I waited in vain. In this state of suspense my reasoning might have terminated in discouraging and ruinous conclusions, had I not been comforted and supported by the kind and encouraging manner in which I was received by aged and experienced brethren, and by the manifest presence of God in our meetings, which were frequently lively and profitable. Sometimes souls were convicted and converted, which afforded me considerable encouragement, as well as the union and communion with my Saviour in private devotion, which he graciously afforded me in the intervals of my very imperfect attempts to preach his gospel. In this way I became satisfied of my call to the ministry, and that I was moving in the line of my duty."

His next appointment was Cumberland Circuit. At the following Conference (1790) he was sent to Portsmouth Circuit, and the year following to Amelia Circuit. When this year's labours were closed, having served four years in the travelling connexion, he was elected and ordained an elder. His appointment from this Conference was to the Greensville Circuit, and he was placed in charge; that is, he had the direction of the ministerial work performed on the circuit. Mr. M'Kendree had already taken a position among the preachers of his day, that, considering his short

period in the work, was most creditable to him. A short time in the ministry was sufficient for his fellow-labourers to discover and acknowledge his noble earnestness and superior abilities as a preacher of "*Jesus and the resurrection.*"

Mr. M'Kendree remained at his post till the General Conference was to assemble in Baltimore, in November, 1792. At that time all the preachers in full connexion were considered members; now only delegates are elected to represent the mass. This Conference possesses considerable historical interest, from an attempt made by one of the members, Mr. O'Kelly, to restrict the power of the bishops in the work of appointing preachers. Mr. O'Kelly was a very popular preacher, who had been presiding elder for a number of years in the southern part of Virginia, and had greatly ingrafted his scheme in the affections of the people, and the younger preachers in that portion of the State. The scheme, after three days spent in strong debates upon its merits, entirely failed. The failure of the project was immediately followed by the withdrawal of Mr. O'Kelly and quite a number of his friends, among whom was young M'Kendree.

It appears, from a conversation with Mr. M'Kendree, reported in "Smith's Recollections," that the character of Bishop Asbury had been shamefully misrepresented to him by Mr. O'Kelly, and that on this account he obtained leave to travel with the bishop, and, indeed, made it the condition of his remaining in the itinerancy. It is quite needless to say that an intimate acquaintance with the beloved bishop created a confidence and friendship which each succeeding year cemented the more surely, till death, at last, separated them for a few years. His continuance

with the bishop was short, for in a few weeks he accepted an appointment to Norfolk and Portsmouth Stations, which were that year united together.

From this time Mr. M'Kendree devoted himself diligently to a comprehensive examination of the rules and discipline drawn up by Mr. Wesley, and adopted at the organization of our Church. This examination convinced him that it was particularly adapted to evangelize all portions of the country, and was agreeable to the government and regulations of the primitive Church. From this time forth none used their influence and talents to preserve the government as it was more than he did.

His stay at Norfolk was not long; for Bishop Asbury removed him to Petersburg, which place he occupied to the close of the Conference year. As the bishop went south on his annual tour, for the year 1794, he took M'Kendree with him to fill a place on Union Circuit, in the South Carolina Conference. Here he remained only one year, for at the next Conference he was appointed to Bedford Circuit, in the bounds of the Virginia Conference. At the commencement of the third quarter he was removed to Greenbrier Circuit, in the midst of the Alleghany Mountains; and at the end of the same quarter he was transferred to what was called the Little Levels, on the Kanawha River, and the farthest extremity of the Virginia Conference. Surely this was itinerancy in such a manner as would frighten many of his followers in this day; but such was the zeal of the preachers then, that they delighted in the most self-denying labours.

His name is found on the printed minutes of 1795, as appointed to Botetourt Circuit. He was in charge of four circuits, and travelled three months on each one of them—

a feature in our work which at the present time has been entirely laid aside. This year's labour was a good introduction to his future position as presiding elder.

At the Conference of 1796 he was appointed presiding elder of Richmond District, which consisted of five large circuits, lying in the eastern and southern parts of Virginia. The office of presiding elder is one of great responsibility, and at that early day in our history it was one of most arduous duties, next in labours and importance to the bishopric. Presiding elders had to travel over the whole district each quarter, holding a quarterly meeting on each circuit, and preaching many times going and coming, the people always considering it a favour to sit under their preaching. The office, then, required a man of great physical strength, of good or superior preaching talents, and a comprehensive mind, so that all the interests of his district would be cared for according to their relative importance. Such a man was Mr. M'Kendree—fully competent for its duties and for its trials.

He continued to preside over this district three years; but at the close of the first year there were added to it three more circuits, in the extreme western parts of the Conference. These circuits lay in the mountainous regions, where the settlements were as yet few, and the difficulties of travelling very great. His ministry was greatly blessed to the good of the whole district; many sinners were awakened, converted, and added to the Church, and the field of labour was enlarged.

In 1799 he was removed to the Baltimore Conference, and placed over a large district, containing nine circuits, lying along the Potomac River, in the States of Maryland and Virginia, and extending from the Alleghany Moun-

tains on the west, to the Chesapeake Bay on the east. At the close of the year he was transferred back to his former field of labour, the Richmond District. This was the last district to which he received an appointment in the Eastern States.

Mr. M'Kendree had not more than completed the first round on his district, arranging the work, and receiving the congratulations of his old friends, when Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat passed through his district, on their western tour to visit the Conference and circuits west of the Alleghany Mountains. Mr. Poythress, who had been in charge of the Kentucky District for some years, was failing both in body and mind. The work was a very important one, lying so far from the centre, and the bishops had selected Mr. M'Kendree to fill the office of presiding elder.

They immediately opened their designs to him, and he seems readily to have fallen in with them, for in about three hours the whole business was arranged, and they started off on their journey. Mr. M'Kendree says, speaking of it at least thirty years after:—

“I was without my money, books, or clothes. These were all at a distance, and I had no time to go after them; but I was not in debt, therefore unembarrassed. Of moneys due me I collected one hundred dollars, bought cloth for a coat, carried it to Holston, and left it with a tailor in the bounds of my new district. The bishops continued their course: my business was to take care of their horses, and wait on them, for they were both infirm old men.”

They passed southward on their journey through Abington, and from thence down the Holston River, into Tennessee, crossing over into the Valley of Clinch River. They

reached the station, on the outskirts of the settlements, and forming a company with some others, on Monday, September 27, 1800, they began their route direct to Kentucky. They pushed forward with all possible speed, and on Friday crossed the Kentucky River. The next day they came to Bethel Academy, in Jessamine County, where there was also one of the largest societies in the West. The weather was very unfavourable, and the bishops were both unwell, especially Bishop Asbury; but the young men stood the journey with much fortitude.

The Western Conference, for the year 1800, was held about the first of October, in the Bethel Academy, in Kentucky. This is the first Western Conference of which we have any correct minutes preserved, and we will glance at it a moment. It appears from the minutes, that the number of travelling preachers present at the Conference, including the two bishops, was ten. The Conference lasted two days; two preachers were admitted on trial, one located; fourteen local, and four travelling ministers were elected and ordained to the office of deacon in the Church. Of those who were present, now, after a period of fifty-one years, two are still living, William Burke and Benjamin Northcot. Two others who were members of the Conference, but not present, are still living,—Henry Smith and Thomas Wilkerson.

Immediately after the adjournment of the Conference, the bishops, M'Kendree, and the preachers whose work lay along this route, made a visit to a great portion of the societies. They passed from the centre of Kentucky, south-westwardly, to Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, and there they came, for the first time, in contact with a camp-meeting. They travelled on together, preaching and

informing themselves of the moral character and the wants of the country, till they came to Knoxville. After spending a few days there, they parted—the bishops to attend the Carolina Conferences, and M'Kendree to commence his “rounds” of quarterly visitation.

The Kentucky District was composed of thirteen circuits, some of which were temporarily joined together for the convenience of the presiding elder. Of these thirteen circuits, two, Miami and Scioto, lay in the State of Ohio, stretching along the Ohio River about one hundred miles, and reaching back into the interior as far as seventy miles. Six of the circuits lay in the State of Kentucky, three in Tennessee, and two in Virginia. This territory now includes nearly six Conferences, supporting several hundred preachers; but at that time M'Kendree had but thirteen assistants in traversing the wide field. Nothing but the deepest devotion to the glorious labour of salvation could have sustained them in their arduous work.

Mr. M'Kendree entered upon his western labours with all the ardour of his energetic nature, and the influence of his example was soon felt in the ranks of his itinerant brethren; for they saw that a leader of such activity and energy would never be content with any sluggish movement in his ranks.

The first year that M'Kendree spent in Kentucky was one of great labour and great success. The Church was no longer languid; a new spirit seemed to be infused into her, and victory perched upon her banners wherever they were elevated. Souls were converted, and societies established in every new settlement.

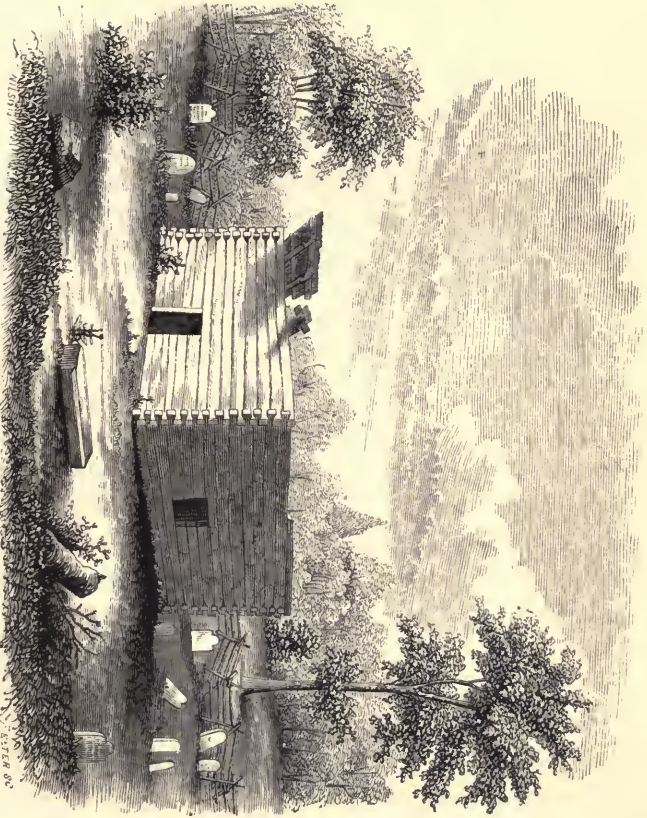
In the summer of 1802 Mr. M'Kendree made his first visit to the State of Ohio, in company with Mr. Henry

Smith, who was then on Miami and Scioto Circuits, occupying all the south-western part of Ohio, the region that includes the first Methodist church in Ohio, the ruins of which still remain, a striking contrast with the hundreds of commodious Methodist chapels now sprinkled over the State. They went over a portion of the ground, preaching near Hillsborough, and then passing down to Gatch's, on the Little Miami River, where the quarterly meeting was to be held.

“Our worthy M'Kendree preached one of his soul-stirring and heart-searching sermons to a large congregation for that country. It was a time of power and love—a soul-reviving season; and some shouted aloud for joy. To this meeting many came from far—some on foot, others on horseback; but on Sunday, the 20th, (June,) the congregation was gathered under the trees, where a stand and a few seats had been prepared. Those who had no seats stood or sat on the ground. M'Kendree preached one of his ingenious and overwhelming sermons, from Jeremiah viii, 22. He took hold of the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, and held it up in its true character. His arguments were unanswerable; and such was the divine influence attending the word, that he carried the whole congregation with him. The very place appeared to be shaken with the power of God. The people fell in every direction.”

This meeting resulted in much good. The work in Ohio, from a variety of causes over which the circuit preacher had no control, had been for some time in a languid state; but from this meeting they were roused up to a redoubling of their diligence, and the cause began to prosper. But this is not an isolated instance of M'Ken-

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dree's success. His approach to the quarterly meetings was hailed by both preachers and people with delight, and the spirit of revival seemed to follow in his footsteps.

At the close of M'Kendree's second year on the western work it had become greatly enlarged; seven new circuits had been formed and added to the district, and the district itself divided into three, M'Kendree still presiding on the one including the most of the State of Kentucky.

The mere handful of members, scattered here and there in the settlements, now numbered at least eight thousand, having increased more than five thousand in the two years. The little Conference of twelve members had more than doubled its numbers. No small part of the impetus which had been given to the western work was through the preaching and superior wisdom of M'Kendree, as the presiding elder.

The Conference of 1804 met at Mount Garrison, in Kentucky. It was the design of both the bishops to be present, and they set out for the West by the way of Pittsburgh, Bishop Asbury in the advance. He was taken down with bilious fever in Green County, Pennsylvania, and so severe was his affliction that Bishop Whatcoat, when he came to him, was compelled to remain and nurse him for more than a month. After his sickness they started on together, but the riding of less than a hundred miles convinced Bishop Asbury that it was impossible to go on. Bishop Whatcoat, therefore, proceeded alone, but did not reach the seat of Conference until it was adjourned. The Conference had met, and placed M'Kendree in the chair, where he had presided with a dignity and efficiency similar to that which marked his course when it became his regular duty.

It is quite impossible to give a circumstantial account of the labours of M'Kendree in the West. It is probably enough to say concerning his regular employment, that he gave great efficiency to the presiding eldership. He did not simply as much as his fellow-labourers expected of him, as belonging to his office, but he was in labours more abundant than any one of them. At the Conference of 1805 he was removed to the Cumberland District. This district lay between the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers, and west of the mountain ranges, and was composed of eight circuits, one of which was in the State of Illinois. The work of the Lord continued to increase in every direction. The year following the missionaries penetrated into Missouri.

In the summer of 1807 M'Kendree resolved to visit these new fields of labour, and started off in company with two of the preachers. They crossed the Ohio River from the lower part of Kentucky, into the State now called Illinois, but then forming a part of the great North-west Territory. The place where they crossed the river was near the present site of Shawneetown. Hence they proceeded west to Kaskaskia, upon the Kaskaskia River, preaching at every place where they could find any people to listen to the word of salvation.

The journey had its difficulties; but when the work of the Lord prospered the travellers counted all their losses and sufferings great gain. They had to encamp in the woods almost every night; cross many rapid and dangerous streams, where the horse had to swim with both rider and baggage; but a season of prayer, and communion with the Most High, made them quite forget their toil and exposure. It is said that after Mr. M'Kendree had preached,

with his usual ability, at one of his appointments, a gentleman said to him: "Sir, I am convinced that there is a divine influence in your religion; for though I have resided here some years, and have done all within my power to gain the confidence and good-will of my neighbours, you have already many more friends here than I have." Mr. M'Kendree spent some weeks in the two States, and then returned, much encouraged, to his district.

The Conference of 1807, which was held in the town of Chillicothe, Ohio, elected him a delegate to the ensuing General Conference, which was to be held in Baltimore, in May, 1808. It was then that his labours in the West closed, and it may be well to glance at the increase of the Church during the time in which he was connected with it.

The field of labour had grown from one district into five, and it now reached from Natchez on the south to Marietta on the north, from East Tennessee on the east to Missouri on the west. Instead of having only eight men, as at the beginning, to stand up and proclaim the gospel, as many as sixty-six were proclaiming the glad tidings to the western settlements; and not a few of these were men of strong minds, who have since occupied important positions in our Church. The membership increased in the same ratio; less than three thousand names were enrolled when he entered on the work, but now there were more than sixteen thousand. And there was something quite as encouraging as this; the work, mighty as it was, was seemingly but commenced, and they could even then, with some certainty, prophesy that this region was to become the stronghold of Methodism.

The General Conference of 1808 was one of much importance, especially as having provided for the regular delegated Conference, and imposed the restrictive rules which are now part of the constitution of our Church.

The death of the venerable Bishop Whatecoat, and the absence from the continent of Dr. Coke, left Bishop Asbury alone to superintend the whole work. He was himself growing too old for the performance of much labour, and it was evident to all that some assistance must be given him in the exercise of his yearly toils. At first a motion was made to restrict the presiding elder's office, and elect seven additional bishops; but this was lost by a large vote. The effort was then made to secure two bishops; but at last a motion prevailed to elect and consecrate only one.

When Mr. M'Kendree came to the General Conference he was unknown to almost all the younger members, both by name and reputation. He had been so far removed from the centre of the work that he had to some extent become a stranger to most of the eastern preachers, and they were not in the least aware of his magnificent powers as an orator and divine. Indeed, his elder brethren, who had not heard him for seven or eight years, were hardly prepared for the improvement he had made during his self-denying labours in the West; but on the Sabbath before the election for a bishop was to take place, he was appointed to preach in the morning at the Light-street Church.

Bishop Asbury, who was present, was heard to say that the sermon would make him a bishop, and his prophecy was true; for on the 12th of May, the day that the resolution passed to elect and consecrate an additional bishop, he was elected. The number of votes cast was one hundred

and twenty-eight; of those Mr. M'Kendree had ninety-five, the remainder being divided between E. Cooper and Jesse Lee; it was the largest majority by which any bishop has been elected, except Bishop Asbury. He was consecrated to the office of bishop, or superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on the 17th of May, 1808, in the Light-street Church, by Bishop Asbury, assisted by Rev. Messrs. Garrettson, Bruce, Lee, and Ware, who were the oldest and most prominent elders in the ministry at that time.

Bishop M'Kendree immediately entered upon the duties of his office with that zeal and diligence which had exalted him in the eyes of his brethren; and Bishop Asbury felt himself greatly relieved, both in the active duties and responsibilities which had been resting upon him since the death of Bishop Whatcoat. Bishop Asbury remarks, in his journal: "The burden is now borne by two pair of shoulders instead of one; the care is cast upon two hearts and heads."

For the first year of Bishop M'Kendree's exercise of the episcopal office he was almost continually with Bishop Asbury, who introduced him to the work, the Conferences, and the preachers. Their route took in nearly all parts of the United States, and a part of Canada, and required them to be moving in all seasons of the year. They visited, prayed, and preached, from Maine to Georgia, along the sea-coast; on the north and west they skimmed along the lakes, the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers; and in the interior their steps were known among the damp swamps, and rich prairies, and magnificent mountains of the Alleghany ranges. The roads, in the best seasons, were but poor—in the wet seasons miserable. They lodged sometimes in the

houses of the rich, but quite as often in the log-hut or cabin, and not unfrequently they camped out in the woods.

The following extract from Bishop Asbury's journal contains a lively picture of the situation and thoughts of these two devoted and talented servants of God:—"My flesh sinks under labour. We are riding in a poor thirty-dollar chaise, in partnership—two bishops of us; but it must be confessed that it tallies well with the weight of our purses. What bishops! Well—but we have great news, and we have great times; and each Western, Southern, together with the Virginia Conference, will have one thousand souls truly converted to God. Is not this an equivalent for a light purse? And are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes, glory to God!"

The General Conference of 1812 met in New-York, and was composed of members from eight Conferences—of men whose Christian character and talents had placed them foremost among their brethren. The growing state of the field seemed to call for an addition to the superintendency; but after a full interchange of thoughts it was considered best to let the subject rest as it was. Bishop Asbury had been meditating a visit to his native land; but at the suggestion of his brethren he relinquished the idea, and remained at his post in the itinerancy as efficiently as his age would allow.

Within a month after the adjournment of the General Conference, the United States declared war against Great Britain, and the hostilities occupied the minds of the people, greatly to the injury of the work of the Lord. Bishop Asbury continued, however, to attend the Conferences, in company with his colleague, upon whom devolved by far the greater part of the labour; yet the presence and coun-

sel of the senior was at all times a source of the highest gratification. The bishops pressed on together, both east and west of the mountains, and to the south, where the work was rapidly extending. So great was their energy and activity, that in the tour of the year 1812 they travelled over six thousand miles in eight months, attending the sessions of nine Conferences, and assisting at ten camp-meetings. This was herculean labour, especially if we consider how poor were the facilities of travel in those days.

The year 1813 was marked with much distress along the lines between the Canadas and the United States, on account of the war, and it affected the societies to some extent. But it did not stop the progress of the work elsewhere, and the bishops were pleased to see that there was a great increase in the members for the year. Bishop Asbury continued to grow weaker, and the more duties fell upon the shoulders of Bishop M'Kendree, of whom he spoke in terms of the highest eulogy.

The summer of 1814 found the bishops quite inefficient. Bishop Asbury was seized with inflammatory fever at Bethel, in New-Jersey, and for a while his life was despaired of. For twelve weeks there was no record in his journal, yet he was able to take up his itinerant course, and be at Chillicothe, Ohio, by the latter part of August. His progress, however, was by slow stages, and with much pain.

In the West he found Bishop M'Kendree confined to the house, having been thrown from his horse, and so badly injured that his usefulness for the whole season was destroyed. This derangement, however, was but a temporary one, and as soon as the bishops were able they passed on

for the South, and presided at the South Carolina Conference.

From this time forth the labour of the superintendency was confined principally to Bishop M'Kendree, for Asbury never recovered from the sickness of which we have spoken. "His countenance was fallen and pale; his limbs trembled, and his whole frame bore marks of decay. Indeed, there was something in his appearance which, while it indicated a 'soul full of glory and of God,' struck the beholder with an awe which may be better felt than described."

But he was generally at his post, and would be found at the Conference, taking his accustomed seat, and preaching one sermon; but beyond this his labours were few, except the judicious counsel from his lips. The administration of Bishop M'Kendree was highly satisfactory, both to the preachers and the membership, and he had already acquired high standing in his office. His energy and self-sacrificing spirit animated those around him with the zeal which is necessary to the itinerant minister. His splendid preaching talent was a model for their own; and his clear, cool judgment, was a worthy example of the manner to rule in justice and wisdom.

The year 1816 opened graciously, for peace was restored to the country; and although the religious world had not yet recovered from the calamity of war, yet the prospect was encouraging that a general revival of religion was about taking place. It was, however, a year marked in the history of our denomination as one of grief, for it marks the death of the great and holy Asbury.

None felt this loss more than Bishop M'Kendree—but not because of the additional labour imposed upon him:

this was slight, as it only lacked a month of General Conference, when the vacant post could be filled. It should be mentioned also that Dr. Coke had died on the 3d of May, 1814. This left the whole responsibility of the episcopacy resting on Bishop M'Kendree.

The General Conference of 1816 met at Baltimore, and found the Church with only one bishop, and his health greatly impaired, although he was still able to perform the duties of his office. Bishop M'Kendree opened the Conference with an address, in which he set forth the general state of the work, and the necessity of making some additions to the superintendency.

The committee to whom the latter portion of the address was referred, reported with promptness, and recommended that two additional bishops be elected and consecrated. Accordingly, on May 14th, the Conference proceeded to an election, and Enoch George, of the Baltimore Conference, and Robert R. Roberts, of the Philadelphia Conference, were elected, and in due time they were consecrated, and entered upon their work. It is only necessary to state, that the new bishops were men whose piety, talents, and particular qualification for the office were well known, and who received the confidence of the whole Church. Their subsequent course, as long as they lived, showed that the Church had acted wisely in their election.

The General Conference had established the Mississippi and Missouri Conferences, making the whole number eleven, and these under the care of three bishops. It had again been urged by some that it would be for the best to divide the work and appoint a bishop to each portion, but the majority were in favour of the itinerant superinten-

dency; and the bishops arranged their labours so that each one of them would be present at each Conference at least once in four years. Therefore we find the bishops pursuing this plan, as far as their health and other existing circumstances would allow.

As we have already stated, the health of Bishop M'Kendree had begun to fail. The severe toil of the eight years that he spent in Kentucky had slowly but surely been working on his constitution, and now it was seen that his labours must be restricted to some extent, for he was no longer able to render that efficient service which the Church so much desired; yet he moved about from Conference to Conference as his strength would allow, giving by his presence a new impetus to the work in every direction. His colleagues were both active and zealous, and the government of the Church was administered with fidelity. The Conferences were attended with punctuality, and the union, peace, and prosperity of the Church were generally secured and promoted, while their services were highly appreciated by the Church.

In the fall of 1818 Bishop M'Kendree set out for the West, in company with Joshua Soule, the book-agent, intending to pay especial attention to the extreme western Conferences and the Indian Missions. He was very weak indeed, but he pushed forward with his accustomed energy until he grew so feeble that he was compelled to make a halt. His affliction was very sore, and lasted a considerable period; but as soon as it was possible for him to proceed on his tour, he went, pressing on through a host of difficulties that would have disheartened any other man. He was so weak as to be compelled to move very slowly, and he had to be lifted from and into his wagon. At one

of the Conferences he had to be taken from his bed and supported by two of the preachers as he performed the ceremonies of ordination.

He continued passing southward till he was at the last station in his journey. On March 5th he preached in New-Orleans, to a large audience, from one of his favourite texts, "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." His stay there was short, when he turned his face to the North, that he might fill his engagements to meet a part of the western Conferences. As he was coming northward he sent the following letter to the editors of the Methodist Magazine. It graphically describes western itinerant life at that period:—

"CAMPED IN THE CHOCTAW NATION, *April 17, 1819.*

"On the first day of last November, I sank under the affliction which was pressing me down while in company with brother Soule, in the State of Ohio.

"After a sore affliction, I left the neighbourhood where I had been confined, in a very feeble state, and travelled about one hundred miles, and continued to speak occasionally, so that I have visited New-Orleans, and partially attended to the Churches in this State. For a few weeks I have gained strength considerably. It is the opinion of my physician that I should go to the North for the establishment of my health; and having a favourable opportunity, I set out in a little wagon, from brother Gibson's last Monday, in company with brothers J. Lane and B. Edge.

"We have camped near companies of drunken Indians—been disturbed to see their situation, and incommoded with their visits during the night; but never injured or

insulted; but mercifully preserved so far through our difficult journey, and from night to night blessed with the privilege of camping peaceably in the woods—a situation very favourable for contemplation. We expect to reach the settlements eight days from this, at our rate of travelling. I intend, if the Lord will, to attend the Ohio Conference next August. I would be with you in New-York, if I could; but here I sit, at the root of a tree, near the line between the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations, writing to you, while brother Lane is boiling ham and making tea for dinner. Some of our company were much alarmed last night by the sound of drunken Indians; but it proved to be fear where no fear was. We rested peaceably in the woods near an Indian hut.

“This is the fourth day since I commenced writing this letter, and I have progressed as time and strength would permit. We have lain in the woods every night, except one rainy night we were taken into the cabin of a slave belonging to an Indian, and were comforted. It has been a journey of difficulties; but no serious obstruction has happened to us. The Lord is merciful and good to us. My best love to Bishop Roberts, and respects to all. We expect to reach white settlements next Saturday, if the Lord permits. Yours affectionately.”

The opening of the General Conference of 1820 found Bishop M'Kendree at his post, but in much weakness; however, he opened the first session with reading the Scriptures, singing, and prayer, as usual. After the opening services he informed the Conference that, on account of his weakness and ill health, he would not be able to discharge the duties of chairman, but would take occasion

to assist his colleagues in the responsible business of the sessions, as his health would permit. At a subsequent session he presented an address, in which he called attention to those subjects which he thought claimed especially their attention. The Conference took every possible occasion to show him their sympathy and respect, which was a source of no small consolation to him, and he properly expressed his gratification for these manifestations of regard and love.

The number of Annual Conferences was now increased to twelve; these were divided between the two other bishops, Bishop M'Kendree, as we have seen, being released from effective labour. His colleagues entered upon their work with much zeal, and Bishop M'Kendree was not backward in lending them all the assistance in his power. He had the missionary department especially assigned to himself, in which he took a deep and absorbing interest; and by his intimate acquaintance with all parts of the work, was very able to direct the means and energies of the missionary society to the right points.

His bad health did not keep him from visiting the whole work. During one season he would be found in the Eastern and Middle States; shortly afterward his steps could be found about the western and southern waters, passing along slowly, visiting many families, conversing freely with them on religion, and supplicating the throne of grace in their behalf. Now and then, especially on the Sabbath day, he preached to a crowd who sat rejoicing to be the hearers of the word as it fell from his lips. He paid special attention to the West, for he felt himself more identified with that portion of the work than any other, it

having been his field of labour when he was elected to the episcopal office.

The General Conference of 1824, at Baltimore, found Bishop M'Kendree present, and conducting as usual its opening ceremonies with singing and prayer.

No less than five new Conferences were set off by this General Conference, increasing the labour of the bishops very materially. The committee on episcopacy, therefore, in presenting their report, recommended that two new bishops be elected and consecrated; and the Conference elected Joshua Soule, of the Baltimore, and Elijah Hedding, of the New-England Conference. Bishop M'Kendree was able to preach the consecration sermon, and act as the officiating bishop in the consecration.

The Committee on Episcopacy also proposed the following resolution, which passed unanimously:—

“That Bishop M'Kendree be, and hereby is, respectfully requested to continue to afford what aid he can to the episcopacy, consistently with his age and infirmities, when and where it may best suit his own convenience; and that the provisions of the last General Conference for meeting his contingent expenses be continued.”

After the session of Conference, Bishops M'Kendree and Soule set out together, and made a tour of the western work; and paying a special visit to the Wyandott Mission, entering into a thorough examination of its whole temporal and spiritual arrangements. Contrary to the expectations of all, Bishop M'Kendree's health began to improve, and he was able to enter more fully on that labour in which he desired to spend and be spent.

Although the health of the bishop was greatly improved, it would not allow him to perform the service of an effect-

ive officer. He was too far advanced in years ever to recover the strength and activity which had marked the years of his vigorous manhood, and the Church could only look for a gradual decline, at least in his physical powers, till he was freed from the sufferings of the body. It was of great benefit to any Conference to have him present at its seat, even if he was absent a great part of the time from the Conference room; for the most unbounded confidence was placed in his judgment and impartiality.

Bishop M'Kendree was present at the General Conference of 1828, at Pittsburgh, and opened the services, as had been his custom to do since the death of Asbury; and it was gratifying to see that his prospect for length of days was better than it had been for some years. The bishops set forth in their address, that "during the last four years it has pleased the great Head of the Church to continue his heavenly benediction on our Zion. The work has been greatly extended; many new circuits and districts have been formed in different parts of our vast field of labour; but yet there is room, and pressing calls for much greater enlargement are constantly made.

"The great and extensive revivals of religion which we have experienced the last three years, through almost every part of the work, furnish additional proof 'that God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists, in America, was to reform the continent, and spread Scripture holiness over these lands.'"

The labour in the episcopacy was becoming so burdensome that it seemed proper to increase the number of bishops, or refrain from adding to their labours. Bishops M'Kendree, Roberts, and Soule presented the following paper to the Conference:—

“Such is the debility of several of the bishops, and such the extent and weight of the episcopal charge, that we think it would be incompatible with the present state of things, and highly improper, to increase the labours of the general superintendents, by constituting any new Conference under the existing circumstances, and that it ought not to be done without the concurrence of a majority of the bishops.” This failed, however, to effect the end desired, for, at the instance of the Committee on the Boundaries of Conferences, the Oneida Conference was formed, making in all nineteen Conferences to be visited by the five bishops.

Bishop M'Kendree, in bidding farewell to the members of the General Conference of 1828, said to more than one that his days were so rapidly drawing to a close that they must not be surprised if they saw his face no more. He had presided but little during the Conference, but his presence was felt, and his counsel did much to prepare them for the storm then breaking about their heads. After the adjournment of Conference he proceeded slowly to his labour, for itinerancy had become as it were a necessity of his being, and his health appeared much better when he was travelling than when remaining still.

The commencement of the year 1830 found him at New-Orleans, from which place, in February, he wrote to the Book Agents at New-York, in part as follows:—

“I intend to stay here some ten or twelve days, then take steamboat to Bayou Sara, then land and visit the Churches as extensively as I can to Natchez. Thence by steamboat to Nashville, by the last of March. From Nashville, I intend to resume my course of visiting the Churches through the lower part of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois.

Thence return with the Conferences from the West, across the mountains, and visit the Atlantic States and Conferences.

“From Philadelphia, where brother Emory left me last spring, I set out to visit the Churches as extensively as I could, through Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee, where I expected to take up my abode during the winter. I have attended three Annual Conferences, several camp, and ten or twelve quarterly meetings. I have seen great and very good times, and rejoiced in the prosperity of Zion. For want of a steamboat I failed to attend the Mississippi Conference as I intended.”

How plainly a soul full of undying energy, and an unconquerable zeal, is manifested in this plan of labour. He was able to accomplish only a part of it. During the spring and summer after his return from the South, he was not able to visit very extensively, but he attended as many popular meetings, and preached as often as his strength would allow. He attended the Kentucky Conference, at Russellville, about the middle of October; and he appears to have now laid out a plan of visitation which would include the South Carolina and all the Atlantic and northern Conferences. His design was to proceed by slow stages from one to the other, and complete the design by the sitting of the General Conference of 1832, which was to meet at Philadelphia.

Those of his friends who were acquainted with the precarious state of his health, readily perceived that his physical powers would not admit of such an attempt; but as his whole soul was seemingly absorbed in its accomplishment, they were willing to test his strength. They therefore advised him to pay a visit to the approaching session of the Holston Conference, which would test his ability for

the more arduous tour. To this plan he yielded with the greatest pleasure.

The distance from Russellville, Ky., to Ebenezer, Green County, Tenn., the seat of Conference, was between three and four hundred miles, the greater part of it a rough road, over the Cumberland Mountains. The tour was commenced with many hopes of a happy completion; but before they arrived at Knoxville, it was easily perceived that he was sinking, and fears were expressed that it was probably his last journey. But he urged them on, in the midst of great sufferings, not a murmur escaping from his lips. They pushed on, and he was so weak that his travelling companion was compelled to lift him into and out of his carriage. Often, while engaged in these kind tasks, his eyes would fill with tears at the sight of the beloved bishop; but only a smile of holy resignation sat on the face of the quiet sufferer.

The bishop reached the seat of Conference on the second day of the session, but was unable to attend to any portion of the business; indeed he visited the Conference room only once, and then remained only a few moments. The greater part of the session he was closely confined to his bed, and it was only at the close of the Conference that he was able to sit up.

Calling upon some of his old and long-tried friends, he laid before them his situation, and asked their advice upon his future course. They assured him, that, as far as they were capable of judging, it was impossible for him to accomplish his contemplated tour, and, therefore, it was advisable for him to return by slow stages to the vicinity of Nashville, and spend the winter among his friends there. This advice commended itself to his own judgment; for he

replied with promptness, "I approve your judgment, and submit." Yet they saw the tears flow from his eyes, when he thus had to relinquish his design—so fully was his heart enlisted in the great work of salvation.

The day following the adjournment of the Conference the fearful return journey was commenced; for it was to be one unmingled scene of suffering to the body, although the soul within that frail tenement was full of patience and joy in the Holy Ghost. The slightest motion of the carriage out of its usual course gave him acute pain. Yet their way lay over rough and rocky roads, and the season was advanced, when the roads were in their worst condition. On the way they were compelled to travel through heavy and protracted falls of rain, sleet, and snow. Nothing but the most imperious necessity would have suggested such a journey, and nothing but unparalleled patience and energy could have performed it; but they pressed onward until he was safely lodged with his brother, Dr. M'Kendree, near Gallatin, in Sumner County, Tennessee.

The kind attention and quiet of his brother's home restored his health to a considerable extent; and as soon as the roads began to improve, in the spring of 1831, he made preparation for an extended tour, which should bring him to the General Conference of the following year. Leaving his winter home, he travelled by slow stages through a portion of the States of Kentucky and Ohio, attending quite a number of quarterly and camp-meetings, visiting as many societies as possible, and preaching as often as his strength would admit. The power of endurance continued, and he was able to cross the Alleghany Mountains in the fall. He passed the winter in Baltimore and its immediate vicinity.

In the latter part of March he passed on, in much weakness, to Philadelphia, the seat of the General Conference. There he lodged in the family of his old and well-trying friend, Dr. Sargent; and all that kindness and unremitting attention could do for his case was cheerfully done. He was, however, very feeble, and was not able to be present and open the first session, which duty devolved on Bishop Soule. He visited the Conference room as often as his strength would allow.

The Conference continued him in his supernumerary relation with an expression of their high regard. Indeed, all the members seemed to vie with each other in manifesting their affection for him. When the General Conference was about to close, he took leave of the preachers, expecting to meet them no more until they should sit down together in his Father's kingdom. Dr. Bangs says: "Like a patriarch in the midst of his family, with his head silvered over with the frosts of seventy-five winters, and a countenance beaming with intelligence and good-will, he delivered his valedictory remarks, which are remembered with lively emotions. Rising from his seat to take his departure the day before the Conference adjourned, he halted for a moment, leaning on his staff; with faltering lips, his eyes swimming with tears, he said: 'My brethren and children, love one another. Let all things be done without strife or vain-glory, and strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.' He then spread forth his trembling hands, and lifting his eyes toward the heavens, pronounced, with faltering and affectionate accents, the apostolic benediction."

They all gazed upon his bowed and feeble form as he passed from their midst, and felt but too fearful forebodings that he was present in this situation for the last time.

Prayers and tears marked his exit, but there was joy in his heart—the joy of a weary labourer who feels that the sun has well-nigh approached the horizon, and that its setting will bring him the sweetest repose.

Immediately after the General Conference Bishop M'Kendree returned to Baltimore and rested a few weeks, enjoying the conversation and society of his old friends, with whom, in years before, he had spent many pleasant hours of religious communion. He bade them farewell at last, and set his face westward. He pushed on as fast as his bodily strength would permit, crossing the mountains for the last time. His route was much like those which he had taken in the days of his strength and manhood. He passed through the western part of Pennsylvania, along the northern part of Virginia, through Ohio and Kentucky, into Tennessee, where he spent the remainder of the year. During the latter part of his journey he became very feeble, and it was found necessary to fix a bed in his carriage on which he might lie down, for he was unable to sit upon the seat.

The following year he was not quite as strong as usual, and therefore he was not found far from home; but he was quite efficient in labours in West Tennessee. He would visit many societies, full of the old itinerant spirit, and preach with an ability which astonished all his hearers; for his sermons were rich in thought and illustration, and in the power and demonstration of the Spirit.

In January, 1834, with an improved state of health, he made a southern tour, visiting Natchez, New-Orleans, and Woodville, passing from these various points on a steam-boat. He preached on board the boat, and in the several places he visited, with an energy and efficiency that re-

mind his hearers of his former years. In the spring of this year he returned to Nashville, and spent the whole summer in travelling through Tennessee, visiting and preaching in different places. He attended the session of the Tennessee Conference, in Lebanon, in the early part of November. This was the last time that he was present at the session of an Annual Conference, and he closed his labours with an affecting address.

Returning to Nashville, he preached his last sermon there, in the new church, on Sabbath, November 23d: this sermon was reported from his lips, and formed the first number of the *Western Methodist Preacher*. Bishop Soule, speaking of this, his last public service, says, feelingly:—

“Here that penetrating, yet pleasant voice, which had been heard with delight by listening thousands, in almost all the populous cities of the United States, and which had sounded forth the glad tidings of salvation in the cabins of the poor on the remote frontier, or to numerous multitudes gathered together in the forests of the western territories, and which savage tribes had heard proclaiming to them the unsearchable riches of Christ, died away to be heard no more. Here he finished the ministration of the words of eternal life, and closed his public testimony for the truth of the revelation of God.”

Immediately after this effort his health declined much below its usually feeble state; and showing no signs of recovery, he concluded, in the latter part of December, to visit his brother, Dr. James M'Kendree, in Sumner County. He reached the place of his destination about Christmas.

- Although the feebleness of age seemed to be his chief

affliction, he was not without bodily pain. The forefinger of his right hand became affected singularly by a swelling where he held his pen while writing. This became exceedingly painful, affecting especially the back part of his head, and when submitted to medical treatment it mocked all the skill of the physician. In moments of acute pain he would pray to God, and call upon those present to assist him in praying that the pain might cease; and often at the close of the prayer the bishop would sink into slumber, the pain having ceased. Such was his faith in God, that when medical skill failed he made prayer his continual remedy.

One who was present with him during his last days, says: "In one instance he told a friend and neighbour that he wished him to pray with him on account of his pain. 'Not,' said he, 'as you pray in your family, but in faith, with direct reference to my case.' After prayer the bishop smiled, raised his hand, and said, 'It is easy now.' This was about two weeks before his death."

It soon became evident to all that his pilgrimage was rapidly drawing to a close; his strength was completely prostrated, and his voice was so feeble that he could only whisper, and that with the greatest difficulty at times. He had for a long time been subject to asthmatic complaints, which now increased, and he was often seized with severe fits of coughing, when he seemed to hold life by a frail tenure. Had it not been for the faithful attendance of his relatives, his situation would have been very painful; but he had every attention.

"His interesting sister was ever at his bedside, where her 'post of observation' had oftentimes been before—for many times before this had the bishop gone home to die. His kind, affectionate, and engaging niece seemed for weeks

to have risen above the want of sleep, as she watched nights and days away at his pillow. The bishop was so affected by her kind attention, that he would say to her, 'Frances, you are like a lamp; you wake when I sleep, to shine on me when I wake.' "

Bishop M'Kendree often had fears that he should be called to die away from his dearest friends and relatives. He greatly desired to die at his brother's; and as the preceding paragraph intimates, he had more than once gone to his brother's expecting not to return again to the busy scenes of duty. And now, when it seemed certain that the hour of his departure was near at hand, he ordered that the bedstead on which his father had died some years before should be brought in, as he wished to die where he had died; and here he awaited the coming of death.

On Sabbath, the first of March, it became so evident that mortality would soon be swallowed up in immortality, that his brother made known to him the opinion of physicians respecting his situation, and questioned him in regard to his last desires. Their conference was at first broken off by a severe fit of coughing, but he presently recovered and made a signal with his hand that he was ready to speak. His voice was so faint that it was necessary that his nephew, Dudley M'Kendree, should lean over him to receive the communications.

The bishop spoke first with regard to the state of his soul, and said, "All is well for time or for eternity. I live by faith in the Son of God. For me to live is Christ—to die is gain." This in the most emphatic manner he repeated, "I wish that point perfectly understood—that all is well with me whether I live or die. For two months I have not had a cloud to darken my hope; I have had uninterrupted

confidence in my Saviour's love." He now commenced, as an exposition of his feelings, to repeat the stanza:—

"Not a cloud doth arise to darken my skies,
Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes."

His voice failed him, and the remaining lines were repeated for him by one standing near the bedside.

Concerning the manner of his interment, he spoke briefly, but pointedly. "I wish to be buried in the ancient Methodist style, like an old Christian minister."

The interval from the Sabbath to the Thursday following, when he died, he was calm and composed, with little pain. To his nephew, Dudley M'Kendree, he said fervently, "Follow me as I have followed Christ, only closer to Christ." His favourite phrase was, "*All is well*," which has become identified with his dying hours.

"Death was in the room. The question had been asked of the venerable sentinel, who shall no more stand on the towers of our Zion, 'Is all well?' He had answered, 'Yes.' Just then, by a sudden spasmodic contraction, he seemed to have a darting pain in his right side. The muscles on his left cheek appeared to suffer a corresponding spasm. They knotted up with a wrinkle, which remained after the pain in the side had passed away. Sensible of this muscular distortion, the bishop was observed to make two energetic efforts to smooth down his countenance. The second effort succeeded, and a dying smile came over the brow of the veteran, and descended upon the lower features of his face. The struggle was over. The chariot had gone over the everlasting hills."

The day and hour of his death were March 5th, 1835, at five o'clock in the afternoon; he was seventy-seven years and eight months old, lacking one day.

On Saturday morning, March 7th, his remains were laid in the earth beside the dust of his honoured father, whom he had loved with the most intense devotion, and from whom he desired not to be separated in death.

In person, Bishop M'Kendree was a little above the medium height, and very finely proportioned, his form in his younger days giving notice of great physical strength and activity. The first glance at his countenance convinced one that he stood before a man of great intellectual vigour, but whose predominant trait of character was mildness. There were both height and breadth to his forehead; and under heavy eyebrows, his eyes, black, impressive, and somewhat protruded, gave a continual evidence of the fires glowing within. His mouth had a more than usually intellectual expression; his chin was square, but not clumsy; and, on the whole, it may be truly said, that a finer countenance, or one more expressive of piety, firmness, and intelligence, could scarcely be found.





Engraved by J. B. Longacre from a Painting by J. Jackson R.A. taken in England in 1820.

JOHN EMORY.

BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

John Emory,

LATE A BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

JOHN EMORY was born on the 11th day of April, 1789, in Spaniard's Neck, Queen Anne's County, Eastern Shore of Maryland. His parents were Robert and Frances Emory, both members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which his father was a leader. As the family mansion was the home of the circuit preachers, he was accustomed from infancy to their company and conversation; and, in fact, from that time onward, he was nurtured in the bosom of Methodism.

His elementary education was received in the country schools in the vicinity of his birth-place. His academic training was conducted by two excellent classical teachers of the old school, and completed at Washington College, Maryland. Before he was ten years of age his father had decided to educate him for the bar, and all his studies for several years were directed with set purpose to this end. Nothing, however, but natural strength of mind and remarkable advancement in study could have justified his entering a law-office at seventeen years of age. He worked in that office most thoroughly: reading hard, writing digests and essays, and grounding himself thoroughly in the fundamental principles of law. This training was afterward of great value to him in a very different sphere of life.

His moral character was of high order from his boyhood. "If ever," says his biographer,* "amiableness of disposition and unimpeachable morality of conduct could assure one of the favour of God, it is believed that this would have been Mr. Emory's case. But he had learned that 'whoso keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all;' and that 'by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified;'—that 'without faith it is impossible to please God;' and that 'he that believeth hath the witness in himself.' And having no such immaculate purity by nature, and no such evidence of justification, his awakened conscience could not rest. His interest in the subject of experimental religion was further increased by the recent conversion of his elder brother and sister. For months he had been labouring under strong convictions; but his naturally retiring and silent disposition made it the more easy for him to conceal the fact from the rest of the family, until the day when he made an open profession of his determination to be on the Lord's side. The following account of the circumstances attending his conversion has been communicated by his surviving sister, who was present on the occasion: 'The evening before the quarterly or two days' meeting, (already named,) several members of our family, among whom were an elder sister and myself, had assembled at our brother Robert's, where my brother John was then living. The hours having been spent in singing hymns and conversing about experimental religion, when family prayer was concluded John betook himself, as he afterward told us, to a retired part of the garden, and there gave vent to the feelings of his burdened spirit. Early on the succeeding Sabbath morning the

* Life of Bishop Emory, by his eldest son, p. 26.

family prepared to go to love-feast, expecting that, as public preaching did not commence until an hour or two later, John would not follow until some time after. He himself, however, proposed to accompany us, and on the way introduced the subject of religion to a pious relation, Richard Thomas, but without disclosing the real state of his feelings. This was, however, sufficient to induce Mr. Thomas to invite him to attend the love-feast. To this my brother assented, provided he would obtain permission of the preacher. But before he had an opportunity of doing so, the preacher presented himself at the door, and stated that none but members of the Church need apply for admission, the house being too small to hold them. This was an appalling stroke to him, and he said to his cousin, "You need not apply, for they will not let *me* in." But this good man, believing that God was at work, succeeded in procuring admittance for him. The house was quickly filled, and the exercises commenced, and soon the mighty power of God was displayed. My sister and myself had secured seats near the door. But few had spoken, when our attention was arrested by a voice which sounded like our brother's. We gazed at each other, and said, "Is it he?" (for we were entirely ignorant, as yet, of all that had passed, and had not the least idea of his being in the house:) "Yes," we said, with eyes streaming with tears of joy, "it must be his voice," for see him we could not. With intense interest we listened, while he there, in the most solemn manner, called upon God and angels, heaven and earth, and the assembly then present, to witness that he that day determined to seek the salvation of his soul. He then sunk upon his knees, and thus remained during the love-feast, calling upon God for the pardon of his sins.

After public preaching the same humble posture was resumed. Many prayers were offered up for him, and much interest manifested. A circle was formed around him of those who knew and felt that their God was a God of mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. All of a sudden he rose from his knees and seated himself; and with such composure and sweetness as I never witnessed in any, before or afterward, declared that he felt peace and comfort,—that all was calm.’”

This was on the 18th of August, 1806. From that time to the day of his death, his Christian convictions, faith, and hope, remained unaltered. The strong character of the man was shown in this as in all things. He knew not how to vacillate.

He was admitted to the bar in 1808, and opened an office in Centreville. Such was the public confidence in his capacity and integrity, that, young as he was, business soon began to flow in upon him. But the young man's mind had received another bent—new impulses were given to him from above, and he felt that he must obey them. He resolved to abandon his profession and devote himself entirely to the work of the ministry. “It was on the 9th of October, 1809,” he writes, “that I made a covenant on my knees, wrote and signed it, to give up the law, after much reading, prayer, and meditation, and on the 10th I did so, though my father was very unwilling.” This act, and the spirit that animated it, will afford a clew to his entire character. It was not so great a thing in itself, this mere giving up of good worldly prospects to become a preacher of Christ; if that were all, we might say that he had done no more than many others; nay, that he had done less. It is not so great a sacrifice, after all, for a man of any elevation

of soul to throw aside trifles for realities; a man altogether worldly and selfish might not understand such an act; but for a noble spirit, the far greater sacrifice would be to crush its heavenward tendencies, and suffer them to be trampled in the dust, by ambition or avarice, in the great highway of life. But the significance of the act lies in this, that the conflict, in the bosom of this youth of twenty, was not merely between worldliness and self-devotion, but between the high claims of a duty whose voice of authority he had implicitly obeyed from his childhood, and which had grown with his growth until it was interwoven with every fibre of his being, and the higher claims of a destiny newly unfolded to him and foreign from the early plans and training of his life. He revered his father as a wise and good man; nay, he loved him with an affection that had not been weakened by severity or alienated by unkindness, for he owed everything to his father's love; he had been used to look up to him for advice, and to render the ready obedience of a dutiful son; and now, in the great turning-point of his career, he was called upon to disobey! That little lawyer's office in Centreville was the scene, night after night, for months, of a mighty struggle. Often have we contemplated it thus: It is his duty to preach. He feels the fire within him, and he cannot extinguish it—the flame of love to God and man. And yet it has not free course; sometimes he even thinks it is dying away, and he longs to give it vent in its natural channels. The world lies before him in its wickedness. Men are rushing toward the precipice of destruction, and he knows that God has made his arm strong to pluck them from the awful brink. He sees moral evil, in its varied forms of malignant power, battling with the right and the true; a warrior's spirit is in him, and he

longs to stand in the thickest of the fray. The life of a man is before him, and he longs to fill it with good deeds. His vision embraces even other and further scenes. He recollects not only how nobly great souls have spent themselves in life, but how nobly, too, they have triumphed in death, and he looks forward to the hour, when, after his work is done, he too shall achieve that final victory. He is ready to go! But he looks even beyond the grave, and there gleams before his spirit-vision the crown of eternal life, all radiant with gems—immortal souls saved through his instrumentality—stars that are to shine forever in his coronet of glory. He *must* go, though all the world oppose him. But let the world speak. It tells him of his talents, and the brilliant prospects before him—wealth, distinction, a high name among men. It tells him of the poverty, the obscurity, nay, it even dares to say, the shame that must come upon him if he change his course. More forcibly, it tells him that he has mistaken his way, and that he can be more useful as a weighty citizen or honest statesman than as a wandering preacher. Is this all? These petty sophisms cannot deceive him; his eye is too keen for that. Not that he is unambitious; but that he is all too ambitious to limit his undertakings to so narrow and temporary a sphere. If this be all, then the struggle is over. But, ah! the real conflict has yet to come. His very virtues are in arms against him. His filial love is pointed, an enemy's weapon, against his own bosom. His long habit of obedience binds him with chains of iron. His father's judgment he has always trusted, and can he pronounce it incorrect now? Certainly it is not altogether unreasonable; his health is so feeble that he has to relax his studies, and he needs the comforts of home, rather than the toils of a circuit. Can

we wonder that he was sorely tried? Could we have blamed him for a different choice? Blame him we might not, but he would assuredly have blamed himself. Had John Emory yielded to his father, his integrity and honour would have been fearfully shaken; thereafter he could not have trusted himself. But his integrity and honour remained unshaken then, as they did in all after time, forming the very basis of his manly character. The decision was made according to the dictates of his conscience, and even then virtue was not without its heavenly witness and reward. "The moment," says he, "I entered into this covenant upon my knees, I felt my mind relieved, and the peace and love of God to flow through my soul, though I had before lost almost all the comforts of religion; and ever since I have enjoyed closer and more constant communion with God than before."

After passing through the various offices of class-leader, exhorter, and local preacher, Mr. Emory was received on trial in the Philadelphia Conference in the spring of 1810. A few years sufficed to establish his reputation for preëminence in the qualities of a true Christian minister. Young as he was, his dignity, sanctity, and weight of character, soon became matter of common knowledge. His discretion, too, was that of riper years; but it was not the discretion which stifles zeal. He was in labours abundant; no proper work was drudgery to him. In 1812 the bishops called for volunteers for the West; young Emory replied, "Here am I, send me." But his wisdom, ability, and acquirements were more needed at home, and the offer was not accepted. In a few years his health began to fail; but his zeal in preaching and study knew no abatement except from sheer necessity. "As he travelled from place

to place, some profitable book was his constant companion. And while Christian courtesy and pastoral fidelity made it alike his duty and his delight to mingle, at proper times, in social and religious converse with the families which entertained him, no false delicacy could induce him to appropriate to man the hours which should be devoted to God, nor to descend from the dignity of the minister to the gossip of the newsmonger. When the claims of hospitality and friendship were satisfied, he would betake himself to some retirement, to prosecute more uninterruptedly his course of mental and religious improvement. By this means he doubtless lost some popularity with those thoughtless brethren who seek in their minister the boon companion, rather than the 'man of God, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;' but, like a wise master-builder, he was laying deep and out of sight the foundations of a character, which became afterward at once an ornament and a defence to the Church. Indeed, the course which he pursued had already secured to him a high character among his brethren. There is still preserved, among the archives of the Asbury Historical Society, the memoranda which Bishop Asbury made, about this time, of the character of the preachers as reported at Conference. The record in Mr. Emory's case is as follows:—1811. 'John Emory—classic, pious, gifted, useful, given to reading.' 1812. 'John Emory—pious, gifted, steady, ——'”*

From 1813 to 1820 he filled the most important pastoral stations in the connexion, such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, &c. In 1813 he was married to Caroline Sellers, whose beautiful life adorned his for only two years,

* The remainder is illegible.

as she died in 1815. In 1816 (the first year of his eligibility) he was elected a delegate to the General Conference; and of every subsequent General Conference until his death he was a member, except that of 1824, when, being in a minority on a question of Church politics, in the Baltimore Annual Conference, to which he was transferred in 1818, he was not elected a delegate. In the early part of 1817 he made his first appearance in print as a controversial writer. Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, had published in the *Christian Register* an essay, entitled, "Objections against the position of a personal assurance of the pardon of sin, by a direct communication of the Holy Spirit." The doctrine thus assailed being one of the distinguishing tenets of Methodism, and one the preaching of which had been a source of great prosperity to the Church and consolation to her members, Mr. Emory came forward in its defence, in two pamphlets, being "A Reply," and "A Further Reply," to the above-mentioned essay. These were noticed in a review of the whole question by Bishop White, with which, it is believed, the controversy terminated.

In the following year, while residing in Washington, he had again to enter into controversy. Some articles having been published by a Unitarian preacher, of the name of Wright, in the *National Messenger*, of Georgetown, D. C., assailing the divinity of Christ, Mr. Emory replied to them in several communications to the same paper, under the signature, "An Observer." These articles were afterward published in a pamphlet form, with the title, "The Divinity of Christ vindicated from the Cavils and Objections of Mr. John Wright," together with a few numbers on the same subject, by the Rev. James

Smith, whose memory is still cherished in the Church for his superior talents as a metaphysician and an orator. It is said that the publication of these essays had a powerful influence in arresting the growing popularity of a dangerous heresy in that part of the country.

In the discussion of the important ecclesiastical questions which agitated the General Conference of 1820, Mr. Emory took a distinguished part, and established a name second to none in the Methodist ministry for skill in debate and wisdom in counsel. He took special interest in the missionary operations on which the Church was then entering, and wrote the report in favour of the Constitution of the Missionary Society which was adopted by the General Conference.

At the same Conference Mr. Emory was chosen delegate to the British Conference, in order to open more close relations between English and American Methodism, and, especially, to settle certain difficulties which had arisen between the preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Canadas and the Wesleyan missionaries in those provinces. He executed this delicate mission to the entire satisfaction of all parties concerned; and, by the dignity and urbanity of his manner, his Christian meekness, his unaffected piety, and the remarkable ability displayed in his speeches and sermons, he left a strong impression in favour not only of his own personal character, but also of the Church and nation which he represented, in the minds of the British Methodists.

It is well known that the period from 1820 to 1828 was a time of great agitation in American Methodism. Various attempts were made to modify the constitution of the

Church, some of which were made by wise and judicious men, on sufficient grounds. But then, as ever, in critical and reformatory periods, there were to be found hasty and ardent men, with impulses stronger than their judgment, and zeal far beyond their knowledge, who, under the guise of reformers, were really revolutionists. Mr. Emory took a conspicuous part in all these controversies, and did perhaps as much as any other man, if not more, to save the Church from the injuries which many of its ignorant friends were in the way of inflicting on it. A few pages, then, may well be spared to a brief account of his share in the doings of that stirring time.

The constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church sprung from the brain of no system-builder. The bishops said truly, in their notes to the Discipline, that "the whole plan of Methodism was introduced, step by step, by the interference and openings of Divine Providence." In obedience to this principle, the presiding elders' office was fully instituted by the General Conference of 1792, which vested the power of appointing them solely in the bishops. Doubts arose at an early period in regard to the propriety of this last provision, and finally there arose a large party in favour of making the office elective. Mr. Emory fell into the ranks of that party, and exerted himself actively in behalf of the proposed change. At the General Conference of 1820 it was found that part of the bishops and a large number of the members of the Conference were in favour of the modification; but as there was still a powerful opposition, it was proposed by one of the bishops "to appoint a committee of conciliation, to consist of six, one-half on each side of the question, and to be appointed by the presiding bishop. This was agreed to, and accordingly

done.* The hope of a happy adjustment seemed now to brighten almost every countenance. The committee went to work. They conferred with the bishops. They consulted among themselves; and at length, with the concurrence and approbation of two-thirds of the episcopacy, they *unanimously* recommended to the Conference the adoption of the following resolutions, viz.:—

“ ‘*Resolved, &c.*, That whenever, in any Annual Conference, there shall be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder, in consequence of his period of service of four years having expired, or the bishop wishing to remove any presiding elder, or by death, resignation, or otherwise, the bishop, or president of the Conference having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number, out of which the Conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted; provided, when there is more than one wanted, not more than three at a time shall be nominated, nor more than one at a time elected; provided, also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder in the interval of any Annual Conference, the bishop shall have authority to fill the said vacancy or vacancies until the ensuing Annual Conference.

“ ‘*Resolved, &c.*, 2dly. That the presiding elders be, and hereby are, made the advisory council of the bishops, or president of the Conference, in stationing the preachers.’

“These resolutions, after an ineffectual opposition on the part of a few individuals, were passed by a majority of more than two-thirds of the General Conference.”

* The committee were, Ezekiel Cooper, Joshua Wells, S. G. Roszel, N. Bangs, W. Capers, and J. Emory.

This result was received with universal joy; the long dispute, it was thought, was ended forever. But these pleasing dreams were soon dispelled by the announcement that Mr. Soule, who had been elected bishop a few days before, but not ordained, had declared, in writing, that if ordained, he would not carry these resolutions into execution, because he believed them to be unconstitutional. This was carrying matters with a high hand; it was nothing less than a claim of power on the part of the bishop "to arrest the operation of resolutions concurred in by more than two-thirds of the General Conference, and by two-thirds of the episcopacy itself." In his conduct on this occasion, Bishop Soule gave a fair indication of the high-episcopal-prerogative doctrine, or rather sentiment, (for it has no logical coherency to make it doctrine,) which he has ever since maintained. Mr. Soule offered his resignation, which was accepted by the Conference. But his views were supported by Bishop M'Kendree, for whose character and opinions there was almost universal reverence. The resolutions, therefore, were suspended for four years.

In Mr. Emory's view, the presiding-elder question, as it was called, sank into insignificance in comparison with this new claim of an episcopal right to veto the acts of the General Conference. It was now the question whether the episcopacy or the General Conference were to be supreme. Without entering into an account of all his labours on this point, it is enough to say that the bishop subsequently disclaimed all intention to exercise such a power; nor has it, or anything like it, since been assumed or claimed by any bishop of our Church.

But if Mr. Emory stood up manfully in opposition to

what he believed to be an unauthorized claim of episcopal power, he was no less useful as a defender of the episcopacy itself in a subsequent day of trial. It is hard to realize, now, the dangers which menaced the Church during the memorable years of the so-called radical controversy. But shall we consider the danger to have been trifling because the Church triumphed? Because the noble ship came out of the storm with every mast, and spar, and rope unharmed, shall we say that there *was* no tempest? Rather let us adore the Power that rides upon the whirlwind, and give due praise to the gallant pilots, who, under his protection, withstood its fury. We should judge of its fierceness, not by what the result was, but by what it might have been had there been no capable steersman at the helm. Who can say but that the desire of change, always a powerful one, and at that time intensified into a passion in some leading minds, would have spread through the Church with revolutionary rapidity, and convulsed it from one end of the land to the other, had it not been arrested in its inception? "There never was a period," says our author, "in the history of American Methodism, which required such prudence in counsel, such firmness in action." Ungrateful, indeed, would it be to forget those who then stood up in defence of our noble institutions; and our right hand shall sooner forget its cunning than we refuse to honour their names and commemorate their deeds. We have no desire to exalt one man unduly above another, but we hardly suppose that any will find fault with us for giving the foremost place among the champions of the Church out of the itinerancy to Dr. Thos. E. Bond, Sen., of Baltimore, whose "Appeal to the Methodists," published in 1827, by its luminous expo-

sition of our system of government, especially with regard to the itinerancy, by its forcible arguments in defence of that system, and by its eloquent appeals to the best feelings of the Methodist community, produced a powerful effect, both in confirming many wavering minds and in preventing the sophisms of the malcontents from leading others astray. This pamphlet, with the "Narrative and Defence," forms part of the history of the controversy. While Dr. Bond was thus acting the part of an able attorney-general, the wisdom and firmness of Rev. James M. Hanson, with whom rested the responsibility of the administration in Baltimore in those perilous times, erected a defence of another sort, no less legitimate, and perhaps no less effective, against the assaults of the innovators. But while these brethren had the danger, and the honour, of fighting the battle in the very district where the enemy's chief strength lay, their efforts were called forth by local circumstances, and some general defence of the Church was needed which should vindicate the fame of her founders, and set forth, before all men, the true principles of her organization. It was reserved for John Emory to do this work. He did not interfere in the controversy until the demand for his services became urgent, and then he interfered effectually. The "Defence of our Fathers," designed, primarily, as an answer to Mr. A. M'Caine's "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," took a wider view of the subject than was necessary to refute that malicious production. Mr. M'Caine went far beyond his associates in violence and effrontery. No calumny was too foul to find currency through his means, if it would only serve his purposes of defamation. An honourable character formed no defence for the living against the shafts of his malice ;

the grave itself was no sanctuary for the venerable dead. His soul had not honour enough "to bless the turf that wrapped their clay;" it could only find utterance, over the tomb, in a hideous howl of slander. But there were many who knew little of the men whom he traduced or the events which he misrepresented: and, in the absence of other information, the very boldness of his assertions gained them credence for a time. "At the instance of some who had taken the deepest interest in the existing contest, Mr. Emory undertook to expose the falsity of his statements and the fallacy of his arguments." In a very short time the "Defence" appeared, and although prepared so hastily, amid the laborious engagements of the book agency, it fully sustained the reputation of its author, and, what is more important, triumphantly vindicated the fame of the founders of the Church. The work at once produced a great sensation; friends were delighted, foes were alarmed. It has since been made a part of the preachers' course of study, and has taken its place, deservedly, among the standard writings of the Church. The biography by his son gives a clear outline of its contents, and the work itself is well known to most of our readers, so that we need do nothing more than express our opinion in regard to its merits. It has the same points of excellence that distinguish all Mr. Emory's writings—clearness of arrangement, fairness of statement, soundness of logic, and conciseness of expression. Nor does it lack pungency of satire and severity of rebuke; and these are combined with deep feeling in the remarkably eloquent passage at the close of the volume. On the whole, this tract, considering the time of its publication, the subjects of which it treats, and the effects which it produced, may be regarded as one of

the most important publications that have appeared in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

A posthumous tract on episcopacy exhibits Dr. Emory as the defender of the Church against assaults from without. Incomplete as it is, it does no discredit to its author; there is enough to show that he was master of the subject, and would have disposed of the controversy satisfactorily had he been allowed to complete his design. The latter and better portion of the tract, containing a partial examination of Dr. Onderdonk's "Episcopacy tested by Scripture," is, in our judgment, as far as it goes, the ablest answer that has yet been given to that ingenious but over-rated production. The high Churchman's weak points were clearly perceived by Bishop Emory, and he attacked them with great weight of metal and directness of aim.

At the Conference of 1824 Mr. Emory was elected Assistant Book Agent, with Rev. Dr. Bangs as senior; and in 1828 he was elected Agent, with Rev. Beverly Waugh as Assistant. In the language of his biographer, his "connexion with the Book Concern, whether it be considered with reference to its influence upon that establishment and the Church at large, or its influence upon the development of his own character, must be regarded as one of the most important periods of his life." The chapter on the Book Concern in his biography, while it in no respect depreciates the services of others, shows that the present commanding position of the establishment is mainly to be attributed to Dr. Emory.

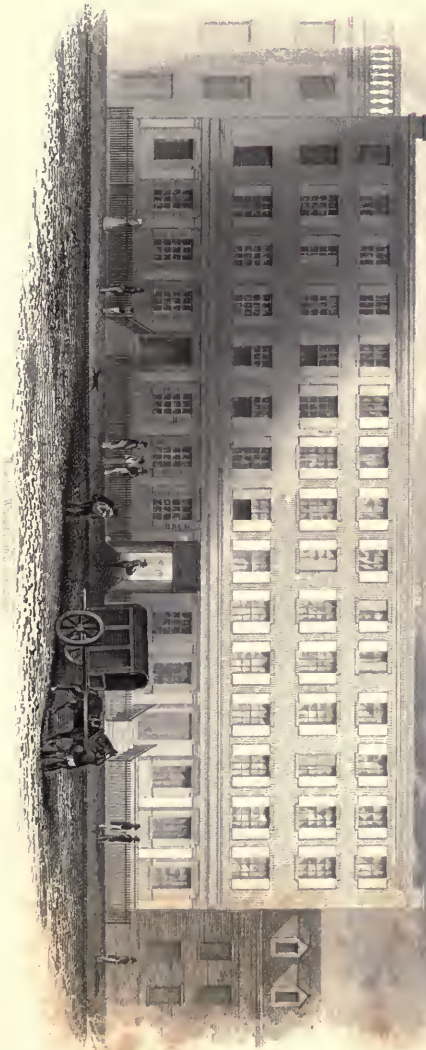
The *Publishing Fund* originated with him. Its origin and objects are set forth in his admirable address to the Church and its friends in behalf of the Bible, Tract, and Sunday-School Societies of the Methodist Episcopal

Church ; and though its results have not fully equalled the expectations at first cherished, they have sufficed to evince the sagacity of the measure. The *Methodist Quarterly Review* also owes its existence to Dr. Emory, who commenced the publication of its first series in 1830. Most of the original articles, up to 1832, were from his pen, and some of them were written with distinguished ability.

A comprehensive sketch of the history of the Book Concern, from the pen of Bishop Waugh, is given in the "Life of Dr. Emory." From that outline, and the more extended account in Dr. Bangs's History, vol. iv, we learn that between the years 1823 and 1828 there was a great expansion of the business of the Concern, to meet which a building was purchased in Crosby-street, and a printing office and bindery established on the premises. During this period Dr. Emory was junior Book Agent. But "this extension of business had not been accomplished without an increase of debt, and although there was now greater energy in the institution to effect its discharge, it may well be doubted whether this result would not have been wholly prevented by the system on which the business was conducted."

The debt of the establishment in 1828 was \$101,200 80, two-thirds of which sum was at interest. Its nominal assets amounted to \$456,898 30, of which only \$59,772 28 were in fixed capital, cash, and notes receivable ; the remainder consisting of stock on hand, and accounts, mostly for books sent out from New-York on commission, from which immense deductions had to be made in order to anything like a true estimate of their value. Indeed the agents estimated the real capital of the establishment at only \$130,002 02,

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we suppose, of course, exclusive of its debt. The commission system of business gave rise to a vast amount of *credit* to a multitude of persons throughout the land; and had it continued, this credit must have gone on increasing from year to year. No skill or industry could, under these circumstances, have paid the debts of the institution and kept up its capital. The inevitable alternative must have been, either the curtailment of the business or the destruction of the Concern. Dr. Emory proposed the bold, but necessary measure of an entire revolution in the mode of doing business, and suggested to his colleague the abolition of the commission system, and the adoption of one founded on the principle of actual sales for cash or its equivalent. In the language of Bishop Waugh, "The two great objects which Dr. Emory aimed to accomplish were, first, the extinguishment of the debts due from the Concern, and second, the actual sale of the stock on hand, and especially that part of it which was daily depreciating, because of the injuries which were constantly being sustained by it, in the scattered and exposed state in which most of it was found. The ability, skill, diligence, and perseverance which he displayed in the measures devised by him for the accomplishment of these objects, have seldom been equalled, and perhaps never surpassed by the most practised business man. His success was complete. Before the meeting of the General Conference he had cancelled all the obligations of the institution which had been so opportunely intrusted to his supervision. He had greatly enlarged the annual dividends to an increased number of Conferences. He had purchased several lots of ground for a more enlarged and eligible location of the establishment, and had erected a large four-story brick building as a part of the improve-

ments intended to be put on them, for the whole of which he had paid. It was his high honour, and also his enviable satisfaction, to report to the General Conference, for the first time, that its Book Concern was no longer in debt."

Such were the immediate results of Dr. Emory's agency. We have one word more to say of it. The energy, efficiency, and method which he infused into all the operations of the Concern remain to this day. He has left his mark upon it. His admirable plans had only to be carried out to place the establishment beyond the reach of ordinary contingencies. His able successors have done their work in his spirit, and developed the resources of the institution to an extent formerly un hoped for ; so that it has stood the ordeal of an immense loss by fire, and of a long period of commercial distress, without even shaking ; and to-day it is, to the best of our knowledge, the second, if not the greatest, book-making and book-selling establishment in America.

During these years of public labour, Mr. Emory's character was constantly assuming more and more commanding proportions to the eye of the Church, and it was the opinion of many that he was destined to be her leading spirit. At the General Conference of 1832 he was elected bishop. His career in the episcopacy was brief, but brilliant. The appointment was hailed with joy throughout the connexion. Great expectations were indulged ; and we believe that in the three episcopal tours which he was allowed to make, they were entirely satisfied. His powers as a presiding officer were tried on the last night of the General Conference of 1832, when he occupied the chair, and gained the admiration of the delegates as well as of the immense concourse of spectators, by the dignity and

firmness with which he discharged its duties. Dignity, indeed, was part of his nature, and it could not forsake him. "I hurry nothing, but endeavour to keep strict order, and every man close to business," was a statement, by himself, of his method of doing business; and admirably did he carry it out. Nor were his labours confined to the Conference sessions. In the intervals of those bodies he was always travelling, preaching, writing, and planning for the advancement of the great interests of Christianity and of the Church. The cause of education, especially, lay near his heart. His share in the organization of the New-York University, the Wesleyan University, and Dickinson College, evince the interest that he took in general education. In addition to this he drew up the outline of a plan for an education society in the Methodist Episcopal Church, which he designed to aid our ministers and others in educating their sons. But his efforts for the improvement of the ministry deserve more than a passing notice. Though the education of its ministers had always been an object with the Church, its plans for that purpose had always been defective, and were imperfectly carried out. Soon after his election to the episcopacy, Dr. Emory devised a course of study for candidates for deacons' and elders' orders, in which, with his usual discretion, he did not hazard everything by attempting too much. In due time the course will doubtless be greatly enlarged, and its natural result will be an elevation of the standard of ministerial knowledge among us, corresponding, partially at least, with the general advance of society. In some sections of the country the movement will be more rapid than in others; but we have no doubt whatever that the Church will ultimately settle down upon the plan of our

British brethren, or upon some better one, for the theological training of its candidates. We have no doubt, either, that Bishop Emory foresaw this result, and would have hastened it had he lived.

He formed a plan, also, for training the local preachers, which, with an argument for the four years' course of study for the travelling preachers, is set forth in his excellent address to "the Preachers within the Virginia, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New-York, New-England, Maine, New-Hampshire, Troy, Oneida, and Genesee Annual Conferences," published before he commenced his third and last tour. He attended all these Conferences but the last two. Nothing of unusual interest transpired at any of them except the New-England and New-Hampshire, where the first Conference difficulties on the subject of abolitionism arose. His conduct there was marked by his usual judgment and firmness. Subsequently he prepared the episcopal address to those Conferences, signed by himself and Bishop Hedding; and whatever opinions may be held as to his views of abolitionism, none can deny that the subject is therein treated with a master's hand. As for slavery itself, that "root of evil," as he characterized it, his views were well known; abolitionists themselves never held it in deeper abhorrence. The Troy Conference of 1835 was the last which he attended.

"It was in the midst of engagements like these, and when in the possession of more vigorous health than he had enjoyed for many years previously, that Bishop Emory was suddenly taken to his rest. On Wednesday, the 16th of December, 1835, a day memorable for the great conflagration in New-York, and for the excessive cold by which its ravages were accelerated and extended, Bishop Emory left

home for Baltimore, in a light open carriage, about six o'clock in the morning, being then before day. About two miles from his residence he had to descend a hill nearly a mile in length. The carriage was seen, it was said, about the dawn of day, passing by a tavern near the top of the hill with considerable velocity; but nothing further was noticed, until, about twenty minutes after, the bishop was found by a wagoner lying bleeding and insensible on the side of the road, about two hundred yards below the tavern. He had, it would appear, while the horse was running, either jumped or been thrown from the carriage, and had fallen with the back of his head on a stone, which fractured the skull. He was immediately removed to the tavern; medical assistance was promptly summoned, but the case was at once pronounced hopeless. Those of his afflicted family and brethren who were in the neighbourhood repaired to his dying bed; but the nature of the injury, while it rendered him insensible to their sympathy, happily freed him from the pain which would have required it. In this state he lingered till the evening, when, at a quarter past seven, he expired.

“Upon receiving the melancholy intelligence, the trustees and stewards of the Baltimore city station requested to be permitted to superintend his interment. Accordingly, under their direction, the body was conveyed to Baltimore, where the funeral sermon was preached, on the ensuing Sabbath, in the Eutaw-street Church, by his old and tried friend, the Rev. Alfred Griffith, from 2 Samuel iii, 38: “Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?” His mortal remains were immediately afterward deposited in the vault under the pulpit, where they lie beside those of the venerated

Asbury, of whom he had been so able a defender, and so faithful a successor.

“The news of this sudden bereavement spread a gloom throughout the vast connexion, over which Bishop Emory had presided for a period, sufficient, though brief, to assure them of the greatness of the loss they had sustained.”

A glance at a few of the prominent points of Bishop Emory's character will close this brief sketch. His *integrity* no man ever doubted. It was written upon every lineament of his strongly-marked countenance; it spoke in every word that fell from his lips; and it was manifest in every action of his life. Known and read of all men as it was, it is almost superfluous to commemorate the honesty of John Emory. Ambition could not tempt it; difficulties could not shake it; gold could not bribe it. He adopted his opinions cautiously, because he would receive none without the fullest assurance of their truth; and when they were adopted, he maintained them manfully, because he believed them to be true. It mattered not to him who was his opponent. Except that his modesty and tenderness of feeling were wounded by the trial, his opposition to Bishop M'Kendree was as vigorous as it would have been, if, on the same subject, he had been contending with a junior preacher like himself. No disputant could be more thoroughly upright in the conduct of a debate than he; sound and legitimate reasoning he would employ against any man, sophistry he never deigned to use at all. He never committed the fatal error of maintaining a good cause by bad arguments. His was not that flexible conscience which bends with circumstances. And though he was prudent, as we shall see, almost to a proverb, we do not believe that an instance could be found, in his whole

life, of his sacrificing the true to the expedient. In the early stages of the presiding-elder question he incurred the imputation of radicalism by his bold advocacy of what he believed to be a necessary change; and in its later days, he was liable, in the eyes of some, to the charge of inconsistency, because he opposed the excesses of persons with whom he had before been partially connected. In both cases he knew the risk he was running; in both he made up his mind as to what was right, and unflinchingly pursued it.

Another striking element of his nature was *strength of will*. He manifested it, even in his boyhood, in obeying the call of God to preach the gospel, in opposition to the wishes of a revered and beloved father. We have seen that the parent was unbending: he found the son worthy of the sire in this same iron trait, which he manifested, not merely in the decision, but in adhering to it through two whole years of gloom, in which his father refused to hear him preach, or even to receive letters from him. What a weight to rest upon the young itinerant, in addition to the cares inseparable from his new position! "It would, doubtless," says his biographer, "be an instructive and affecting lesson to peruse the private diary which he kept at this period." It would, indeed, have proved a precious relic; but even without it, we can appreciate the firmness of his conduct in this early day of trial, and his subsequent history showed a full development of this powerful element of character. Nor could it ever be mistaken for obstinacy, that "stubbornness of temper which can assign no reasons but mere will for a constancy which acts in the nature of dead weight rather than of strength, resembling less the reaction of a spring than the gravitation of a stone."

Knowing the purity of his own intentions, confiding in his own judgment, and perceiving his superiority to most of the men around him, he was rarely to be found in that miserable state of suspense which seems to form the common atmosphere of men of muddy brains and feeble wills. It was surprising to see how such men would fall back and clear the way for his coming. It was known that he was a wise and thoughtful man; but if it had not been known, also, that his will was not to be baffled, he never could have attained the power over men which he possessed. The great secret of heroism lies, indeed, in this strength of will. A man may be as honest as the day and as clear-headed as Lord Bacon; but if his will be imbecile, he will be thrust aside in the day of trial by men of far humbler pretensions. One Mirabeau, in a French revolution, is worth a score of Neckars. We are no idolators of mere energy of mind, and yet we are too well assured of the immense power it confers on its possessor not to honour it, when we find it combined with inflexible integrity and directed to noble objects. In Bishop Emory it was exhibited not only in that promptness of action which we call decision of character, but also in that well-sustained steadfastness which is perhaps more rare—consistency. No one doubted that when the time came for action he would be prepared; no one expected to find the deed of one day nullified by that of the next.

Many strong men keep us in constant fear lest they should make some false step. When in possession of power they are watched by a thousand anxious eyes. With unimpeachable honesty and Roman firmness, they are so destitute of prudence that their power is wasted in the endless strifes which they excite by the wayside,

instead of being treasured up for great emergencies. Not so Bishop Emory. He disobeyed his father, it is true; but not without foresight on his own part, and wise counsel from his friends to fortify his decision. Afterward he was proverbially a prudent man. Dr. Bangs says, "that he was always desirous to have his errors corrected before they should be exposed to the multitude for indiscriminate condemnation." This combination of discretion and firmness is so strongly marked, that we should be tempted to illustrate it at length from the biography before us, did our limits allow. It must suffice for us to point to his success in his very first station, where his remarkable prudence fully justified the reply of Bishop Asbury to some who doubted his qualifications for the post, "Never mind, he has an old head on young shoulders;" to his conduct in his delicate mission to England; to his defence of the institutions of the Church; to his management of the Book Concern; and, lastly, to his performance of episcopal functions. We have traced him through the whole of this career, and found him often placed in circumstances of perplexity and even of peril, but never once have we found his firmness shaken or his discretion at fault. We are aware that this is high praise, and that some have tried to impugn his conduct, in certain instances, as indiscreet, to say the least; but we are firmly convinced that in no case, even the most difficult, could he have done less than he did without sacrificing that steadfastness of purpose which he would have died sooner than relinquish. He could not have been more discreet, even in appearance, without being less firm. But there have not been wanting those who considered his very caution a fault; and we have heard him charged with a morbidly scrupulous care for his own reputation.

A newly published book was once under discussion in the presence of one of our living bishops, and several errors, evidently the result of carelessness, being pointed out, the bishop remarked, "Brother Emory would have worked his finger-nails off before such inaccuracies could appear in a publication of his." The remark was no exaggeration. No man could be more conscientious as an author than John Emory. So great was his anxiety that all his compositions should be finished, that we have known him, after correcting and recorrecting until his manuscript had become the plague of the compositors, to make free with the proofs to an alarming extent, and sometimes to throw down whole paragraphs and pages after they had been set up. Shall we call this a fault, and thus sanction that lazy confidence which enables some writers to utter their crude thoughts in careless language, to the disgrace of the Church and the injury of good letters? By no means. Rather let us praise the sternness of principle which governed the man even in such matters, and the prudence which caused him so anxiously to strive for correctness in all things. The *limæ labor* is not so common that we can afford to stigmatize it as a weakness.

Such were some of the prominent traits of Bishop Emory's character. Less known, of course, were the strength and tenderness of his affections. How touchingly beautiful are the letters written to his mother, at the time of trial to which we have referred! How carefully he avoids any allusion to his father's course, and how tenderly he speaks of him afterward! The opinion seems to have gained ground, in some quarters, that he was cold and repulsive; and some, observing the stern severity of his manner in the performance of public duty, have judged

that his heart was formed in the mould of austerity. Those thought differently who knew him well. In the account, given in his own language, of his wife's death, every word is fraught with feeling; and never was there a nobler expression of human love than is found in the closing passage of a letter to his mother-in-law on that mournful occasion: "I think, sometimes, that I could brave death to see her only." The letters to his family and near friends, especially in times of sickness, trial, or death, literally breathe the spirit of love.

But there was some ground for the opinion that he was not remarkably affable; certainly he was not as *accessible* as he might have been without any detracton from his dignity. This remark, however, can only apply to his business intercourse with others. When he gave himself to the enjoyments of the social circle he was delightfully easy; there, and there only, did his heart find its full play. His friendships, too, were sincere and steadfast, and they could not be otherwise in a nature of so much depth and constancy as his. His biographer tells us that "his heart was too warm and generous not to seek some kindred spirits with whom to hold sweet converse; though even with these, his most unreserved intercourse never descended to anything unbecoming the Christian or the minister." We think it may be said, in addition to this, that he was not communicative even to his best friends. He was not accustomed to indulge the entire heart in the gushing flow of sympathy; his soul did not utter itself, as some men's do, in all its fulness; nor did he "delight in the detail of feeling, in the outward and visible signs of the sacrament within—to count, as it were, the pulses of the life of love." His affections were always under the control of his judgment.

To attempt a regular analysis of Bishop Emory's mind, is a task to which we dare not address ourselves. No man can trace his history and read his writings without perceiving that *accuracy* was one of his highest aims. This resulted not only from the character of his mind, but from his mental habits, formed early in life. He could never be satisfied with partial views of any subject. "In boyhood," says his biographer, "whether the subject of inquiry was the pronunciation of a word, or a question of science or religion, he could not be content with conjecture, when certainty might be attained." And, in after life, he studied thoroughly whatever he undertook to examine at all, and in setting forth the result of his labours, he surrounded his subject with an atmosphere of light. He had the clearness of Guizot, though without his eloquence. Indeed, the most prominent feature of his mind, it seems to us, was its method. When he spoke, you saw that every sentence was thought out, and present to his mind as a whole, before he uttered a syllable. In writing, too, he always took care to see the end from the beginning. Good logic was natural to him; a sophism grated on his mind very much as discord annoys a musical ear. A difficult question fell to pieces before his power of analysis just as a compound substance is decomposed by chemical agents. Nor was his method mere arrangement, that empty counterfeit which cheats some men into the belief that they have well-ordered minds, as if to build up a science were the same thing as to make a dictionary. It consisted, first, in the natural clearness of his understanding, and, secondly, in his habitual reference of the species to the genus—the subordination of the parts to the whole—the contemplation of the relations of things as well as of the things themselves. His associa-

tions were principally made under the law of cause and effect; the principle involved in any phenomenon, and not the mere attendant circumstances of time and place, took root in his mind, so that his memory was eminently philosophical. Add to this his methodical industry, and you have the secret of his extensive knowledge, his readiness in debate, his admirable self-possession as a presiding officer, and even the versatility which enabled him to excel in all that he undertook. He understood most thoroughly the value of the old maxim, *everything in its place*, a maxim for which genius itself can find no substitute. Coleridge says truly, that "where this charm is wanting, every other merit either loses its name, or becomes an additional ground of accusation and regret. The man of methodical industry organizes the hours and gives them a soul; and that, the very essence of which is to fleet away, and evermore to *have been*, he takes up into his own permanence, and communicates to it the imperishableness of a spiritual nature. Of the good and faithful servant, whose energies are thus methodized, it is less truly affirmed, that he lives in time, than that time lives in him." Bishop Emory was, to a remarkable degree, this good and faithful servant.

We do not hesitate, therefore, to say that he was a man of great talent. But he was not a man of genius. Every subject had to be brought within the scope of his understanding, and when there, he was perfectly master of it; but in the outer region of the imagination he was comparatively a stranger. No poetry has been found among his remains, and for a very good reason; he did not possess "the vision and the faculty divine." It was not for him to clothe his thoughts in

“The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet’s dream;”

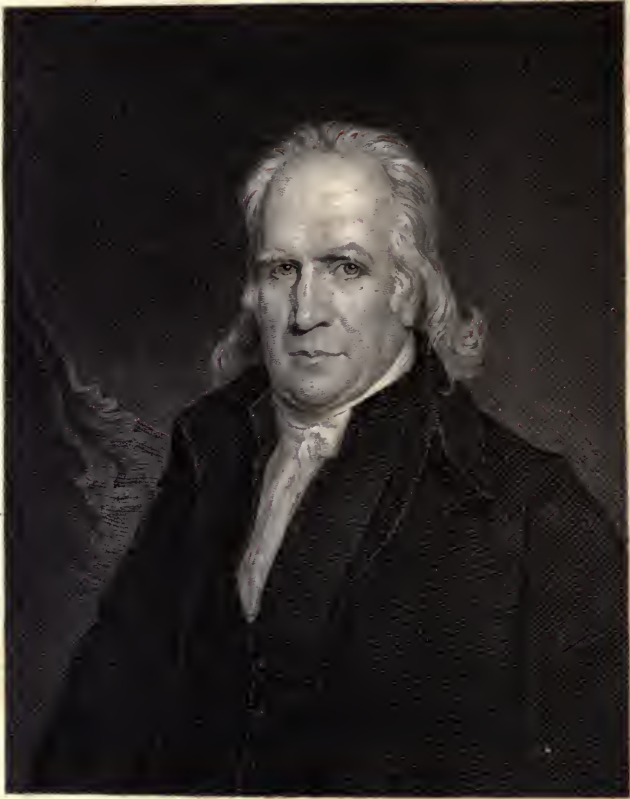
for the light that was in him, and which he poured forth in a flood of radiance upon every subject properly within his sphere, was the light of the understanding, and not of the imagination. That he would have been a greater man if more richly endowed with this highest of human gifts, we cannot doubt. His preaching would have been more attractive, his writings more fervent and glowing, and his whole character more ardent. The powers that he possessed qualified him admirably, however, to discharge the duties that devolved upon him, and he worked better, perhaps, with his diversified talents, than a man of genius could have done in the same circumstances. What we have said of him, thus far, amounts to this: that he was eminently a practical man. Without knowing the extent of his studies in modern philosophy, we can easily imagine the contempt in which he would have held transcendentalism. German metaphysics must have been all cloudland to him. He would have placed Kant and Schelling upon the same shelf with Jacob Behmen and Baron Swedenborg. Even Cousin could have found no favour with him. To some this will seem high praise; to others, just the reverse; but, at all events, we believe it to be true.

Dr. Emory was a deeply pious man, in the highest sense of the word. Religion, with him, was not merely a matter of principle and habit, but had its root deep in his heart, and gave worth and dignity to his entire being. He was not much given to talk about his personal religion—the stream was too deep for that; but his communion with God was, we doubt not, uniform and abundant. Equally removed from formality and enthusiasm, his

piety purified his affections, elevated his intellect, and controlled his life.

In this sketch the writer has endeavoured to set forth the character of John Emory with all the impartiality which is compatible with the deepest reverence and the tenderest love; at the close he may be allowed one breathing of his own personal feelings. Little did he think, when at the Troy Conference of 1835, the bishop, at the close of an interview in which he had imparted some of the rich treasures of his experience in kind advice, folded him affectionately in his arms and bade him farewell, that it was a farewell forever! Earnest was his last gaze upon that form beloved, but O, how earnest *would* it have been had he known that it was the last. Carefully did he record in his memory the words of manly wisdom that fell from those honoured lips—how would each precious syllable have been treasured, had he known that these were the last accents of that almost father's voice that should fall upon his ear! To the writer, the name of EMORY is fragrant with a thousand blessed recollections. And many hearts, throughout this continent, will throb in unison with his own, when he declares, that for him, that name is the very synonyme of nobleness and honour, associated, as it is, with all that is elevated in intellect, all that is magnanimous in self-devotion, all that is pure in virtue, and all that is sublime in piety.





Engraved by J. Mackenzie from an original painting

REV. ROBERT RICHFORD ROBERTS,

One of the Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church

Robert R. Roberts,

LATE A BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

“THE grandfather of all the missionaries!” Such was the expressive designation by which the red men of the Far West were wont to speak of him whose benignant features beam upon the reader from the opposite page. For many years the senior superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church,—an apostolic bishop, deriving his title and his authority from the highest source, and ever exercising his functions with gentleness and diligence, with meekness and yet with firmness and decision, he was esteemed and beloved by the clergy and the laity—honoured in life and lamented in death by the refined and the wealthy no less than by the poor and the uneducated. Simple in his manners, and yet gracefully dignified,—unobtrusive and diffident, but never forgetful of the responsibilities devolving upon him,—eloquent, and of course always plain and intelligible in his public ministrations, he was equally at home in the wigwam of the savage, on the rough stand of the camp-meeting, or when proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ from the pulpits of metropolitan cities. His memory is precious, and it is a pleasant thing to trace the successive steps of a life so simple and so honoured, and to mark therein the all-sufficiency of the Saviour’s grace.

He was a native of Maryland, the son of a poor farmer, who, at the call of his country, shouldered his musket in the war of the Revolution, and was engaged in the battle of the Brandywine with Lafayette, and at Germantown and White Plains with Washington. The patriot-farmer was enabled to give his children but little education, and he left them no patrimony save the legacy of his good name. Robert's early training devolved mainly upon his mother. By her he was taught to read the Scriptures, to say his prayers night and morning, and to recite from the Catechism of the English Church. Some six or eight months schooling from an Irish pedagogue, by whom he was instructed in penmanship, the rudiments of English grammar, and the first rules of arithmetic, completed his scholastic course. As in the case of the two most eminent disciples of the Saviour, at whose bold eloquence the people marvelled, knowing them to be ignorant and uneducated men, so, frequently, after listening to words of power from the lips of the farmer's boy, men were wont to account for the marvel by taking knowledge of him that he "had been with Jesus." His whole ministerial life was an illustration of the glorious verity, that God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

When about ten years of age he removed with his parents into Westmoreland County, in the State of Pennsylvania, and here, with his mother, he went soon after to hear one of the pioneer heralds of the sect everywhere spoken against. The Methodist preacher brought certain strange things to their ears. His word was with power. The little boy, for the first time, felt himself to be a sinner. He wept and trembled. His father had indeed denounced

the whole sect, and the lad had been taught to regard this messenger of Christ as a false prophet. But this did not soothe his pain, nor extract the rankling arrow. Something within whispered that the words to which he had listened were God's own truth; and he felt the necessity of changing his course of life, that, if possible, he might avert impending wrath. Now he began to aim at leading a new life. He resolved to be obedient and dutiful to his parents, to shun bad company, to be watchful over his lips, and to read with more care the Bible, and such religious books as fell in his way.

The plan of salvation by faith was as yet unknown to him; nor, as it seems, had he any other idea of prayer than as the repetition of forms laid down in the Catechism and repeated from memory. Returning homeward one evening from the labours of the day, (for he was now engaged in assisting his father on the farm,) he overheard in the woods near the house the voice of his sister, some years older than himself, uttering the language apparently of heartfelt trouble and grief. He drew nearer to the spot, and ascertained to his surprise that she was pleading with God for the pardon of her sins. Awe-struck, the lad listened to her supplications. What had Elizabeth done that she, so amiable, so much better than himself, should be in such deep distress, such apparent agony? He retired without being observed, and said nothing of the strange scene he had witnessed. But he pondered it in his heart, and soon after found his own way to the throne of grace, where, in secret, he also called upon his God.

Several years elapsed, however, before he found peace in believing. His sisters, then his mother and two of his brothers, and afterwards his father, united with the Meth-

odists, and their dwelling became a regular preaching place for the itinerant ministry. But Robert, industrious in his field-labours, attentive to all the means of grace within his reach, and an earnest seeker of salvation, did not venture to have his name enrolled upon the class-paper.

“What rough-looking boy is that in the hunter’s shirt?” Such was the not unfrequent inquiry of those who came to his father’s house, especially on quarterly-meeting occasions, when it was used, a rude log-cabin though it was, as a temple for the solemn worship of the Most High. That rough-looking lad, so busily employed in waiting upon those who came from a distance, in preparing for their accommodation and taking care of their horses,—esteeming nothing too degrading or too menial,—that rough-looking boy in the hunter’s shirt is he who is destined to preach Christ to listening thousands from one end of the continent to the other; to superintend the affairs of the most numerous religious denomination in the land; to preside over conferences of learned ecclesiastics; to fill the seat of the sainted Asbury as the colleague of the mild M’Kendree, the fervent George, and the sagacious Hedding. Scarcely less improbable was it to the eye of human reason, that he who held the murderers’ clothes at the martyrdom of Stephen should finish his course with joy, “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.”

Robert was now in his fourteenth year, tall and stout for his age, with a body inured to toil, and, his brothers having left the paternal home, the chief dependence of his father in the cultivation of his farm. Still serious, penitent, and anxiously seeking to know and to do the will of God, light dawned upon him from the Sun of righteous-

ness while engaged in secret prayer. His own account, as given in after years, is characteristic of the man. "One day," he says, "about sunrise, in the month of May, I was in a corner of the fence praying, when, I humbly trust, my sins were pardoned, and God, for Christ's sake, accepted me. Before that time I had frequently had sweet intimations of the goodness and mercy of the Lord. My heart was tender, and I felt as if I could love God and his people; but yet, until that morning, my mind was not at rest. Then everything seemed changed. Nature wore a new aspect as I arose and went with cheerfulness to my work, although I did not then know whether I had received all that I should look for in conversion. I never had such alarming views of my condition as some have experienced. My mind was gradually opened, and although I had led a moral life, I firmly believed that my heart must be changed. I do not remember the precise day of my conversion, though the scene, as it occurred that morning, has ever been deeply printed on my memory."

Such is his own simple narrative of that most important event in his history. And now the Spirit whispered, "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God;" but his natural diffidence, no less than what he deemed his totally inadequate education, prevented him from making known to the Church his impressions upon the subject. But he preached, nevertheless. Following the plough or feeding cattle, clearing the land or gathering in the harvest, his mind was intently occupied with subjects for the pulpit. The farm was his theological seminary. There he mused and meditated upon what he had heard on the preceding Sabbath, or read in the intervals of his toil. He made skeletons of sermons, and accustomed himself to the sound

of his own voice by proclaiming to the trees of the forest the glad tidings of salvation. He was appointed leader of a class, and by slow degrees, and after many struggles, acquired sufficient confidence to speak to the members a few words of exhortation. The little flock there in the wilderness were edified, and seconded the motion of the Spirit that the pulpit was the appropriate place for their youthful leader. He was himself satisfied of the fact, and devoted all his leisure to the diligent perusal of the Bible and the writings of Wesley and Fletcher; but he could not bring himself to ask for a license to preach. He shrunk from the fearful responsibility. The preachers who visited that region invited him again and again to exhort publicly, and to commence the exercise of those gifts with which they knew him to be endowed, but in vain.

“How ready is the man to go
Whom God has never sent;
How backward, timorous, and slow
God’s chosen instrument!”

On reaching his twentieth year, as if to hedge up his way completely from what he nevertheless felt to be the path of duty, he married. This event, it is thought, was hastened, with a view of relieving himself from the prospect of the itinerant ministry; for very few of those who thus sought the lost sheep of the house of Israel were encumbered with families, and the reception into an Annual Conference of a married preacher was in those days an event almost unprecedented. But his marriage brought no rest to his mind. The impression of duty was not to be shaken off. Mental darkness and dejection of spirits overwhelmed him. He became unfitted for business, and

was signally unsuccessful in the management of his worldly affairs. Unasked for, a license to exhort was put into his hands, with the hope that it would induce him to go forward in the path of duty; but he made no use of it, and it served only to increase his distress by silently reminding him of what the Church expected and of his own delinquency. After a sermon on the ensuing Christmas-day, the preacher publicly requested him to come forward and conclude the service with an exhortation. Mr. Roberts declined, and ran out of the house. A few days after, the preacher—he was a local preacher, holding an office somewhat similar to that of Ananias, who was sent to open the eyes of Saul of Tarsus—sent to him, in writing, what he called *a vision of the night*. “I thought,” said he, “I had got free from this region of misery and woe, and was admitted into the world of spirits. I beheld there bright thrones, and one in an exalted station, on which was placed a crown dazzling with brightness. It was fixed near those of the prophets, apostles, martyrs, and eminent ministers of the gospel. I drew nigh to behold it, and *was informed it was for you*.”

“I thought the Saviour commanded that you should be brought forward to see what was here in reservation for you. In a short time a seraph fulfilled the high command, and you were placed in presence of the great King. The Saviour fixed his eyes upon you, which kindled in your heart a burning love to him, causing you to neglect everything else. Overcome by the divine presence, you fell at the glorious feet of the Saviour and poured out a flood of gratitude. He said to you, ‘Son, thou art ever with me. All this glory shall be thine, yet the way thereto is not only difficult, but contrary to flesh and blood.’ I thought

you replied, 'Make known to me the way, and in thy strength will I walk therein.' He then said, 'Go quickly forth among the crowds of earth, and let love and pity raise thy voice aloud to inform them that I am willing to save the chief of sinners from hell and from a dreadful eternity.'"

In the course of the dream various objections are made by him for whom this bright throne was prepared: his unfitness for so great a work, his lack of gifts, his unholiness, his dread of criticism, his pride. By the ingenious dreamer these are all overruled, and shown to be mere delusions of the enemy; and the conclusion is the utterance, by the hitherto disobedient prophet, of Paul's memorable words—"Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!"

Frequently in after life was the good bishop wont to advert to the dream of the local preacher; and, now that he is seated upon that throne, and wears that dazzling crown, is it unlawful to suppose that this reminiscence of the past may form an ingredient in his cup of perfect bliss?

Soon after, at a watch-night, he gave his first public exhortation, having journeyed some six or seven miles on foot for the purpose of being present. He was clad in the garb of a backwoodsman; but his discourse, says one who was privileged to hear it, "was worthy of gray hairs and broadcloth." In fact, the whole congregation were perfectly amazed at the eloquence of his appeal—its propriety of language and its force of argument. He preached his trial sermon from the words of the prophet, "O Lord, revive thy work," and was recommended to the Baltimore Conference as a suitable person to be received as a travelling preacher. He did not attend the meeting

of that body, having, as he conceived, done his duty by consenting that his application should be forwarded, and, with a mind at rest, he awaited the result. The responsibility was now thrown from his own shoulders; and if the Conference had declined to receive him, he would have taken their decision as the voice of God and rejoiced, for, as yet, he dreaded the sacrifices, the trials, and the toils of an itinerant life. Such, indeed, had nearly been the result. On the presentation of his name, objections were made to his reception. Most of the leading members of the body were single men, and young Roberts had a wife. The few who were acquainted with him stated his qualifications and eulogized his talents. They knew Mrs. Roberts also, and were satisfied that she would be no hindrance to her husband in the work of the ministry; but the prejudice against receiving married preachers was so strong that but a bare majority voted for his reception, and he was appointed as junior preacher on the Carlisle Circuit.

As is the case with regard to most of the early Methodist preachers, there are but few memorials of the labours of this young itinerant. "He was powerful and popular from the beginning," is the brief but comprehensive testimony of one who knew him well. At the various appointments on his circuit, he was, as a preacher, exceedingly popular. The more intelligent portions of the people of all denominations attended upon his ministry. As a singular peculiarity, it is stated that this tended rather to intimidate than to encourage him; and, at one of his Sabbath appointments, seeing the multitudes flocking to the house where he was expected to preach, his heart failed him, and he hid himself away until long after the time for commencing worship. He then dragged himself into the church, where

he hoped to find some local preacher in the pulpit. He was disappointed, entered the sacred desk, and, after a few minutes spent in secret prayer, conducted the service with unusual liberty. "His performance on that occasion," says his biographer, "was spoken of with enthusiasm by the *élite* of the town, and served as a new reason for the increase of his congregation in future." His unaffected modesty won the hearts of his hearers; his solid good sense instructed the most intelligent; and the deep vein of piety and the holy unction which imbued his discourse, "became wine and fat things to the religious part of his audience."

With some of his own people, however, he was not so popular. His love of order and decorum, and his natural good taste, revolted from practices which, to some extent, were common in those regions at that day, and which were deemed, by the more enthusiastic, as sure evidences of the divine presence. Loud shouting, jumping, clapping of hands, and falling prostrate upon the floor, embarrassed the young man exceedingly. "We like him," said they, "well enough as a preacher; but when our meetings become lively he stops, and has nothing to say." So it was all through life. As junior preacher, when in charge of a circuit or station, as presiding elder of a district, and when in the office of bishop, he stopped and said nothing during these occasional paroxysms of excited feeling; but that was all. He uttered no language of rebuke, lest he might thereby cause Christ's little ones to stumble. He stood still, and resumed not his discourse until the storm had passed away. The result was, that when Roberts was in the pulpit, while there was always deep feeling, mingled at times with the half-stifled sobs of the penitent, the

people controlled these boisterous manifestations, and all things pertaining to divine worship were done in accordance with the apostolic direction, decently and in order.

While he was upon Montgomery Circuit, to which he was transferred at the close of his first year's labour, he was invited to attend a camp-meeting in the neighbourhood of Baltimore, the first ever held east of the Alleghany Mountains. This was in the summer of 1803. It was a time of great power. Sinners fell in every direction. The noise and confusion unfavourably affected the mind of Mr. Roberts. He became very much troubled. For two days he was in a state of sadness and dejection. He knew not what to do. Balancing the evil and the good, and endeavouring to lay aside his prejudices and prepossessions, he retired into the woods, where, after a season of secret prayer, his mind became relieved, and he was enabled to take part in the exercises. Thereafter, although he occasionally attended such meetings, and preached at them in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, he never greatly admired them, and had doubts of their propriety; at least, in those parts of the country where there are houses of worship sufficient to accommodate the people.

For the sake of his own comments, we may here advert to an undertaking which Mr. Roberts afterward regretted. This was the building of a mill, from the profits of which he hoped to maintain his family. Thirty-seven years afterward he gives this account of the matter, with advice less needed now, we venture to hope, than in the earlier days of Methodism. "I would advise," he says, "all preachers never to quit the work of the Lord to serve tables. However fair their prospects at making money may be, they

are frequently delusive, and such ministers are losers in the end. As I had but little support from quarterage, I thought my family could be maintained by a mill, and I should be better able to travel without anxiety. But it was not so. It embarrassed my mind and took up my attention; and though for a while it did well, it eventually proved a loss."

The Conference passed a vote of censure upon his conduct for thus endeavoring to eke out the scanty pittance received for his ministerial support. It seems to us that the censure was more deserved by the people to whom he broke the bread of life. His poverty was so great on one occasion, when about to take a long journey, that all the cash he had in the world was fifty cents, with which, and the like amount borrowed from his colleague, he left the West Wheeling Circuit to attend the General Conference at Baltimore, in the year 1808. With this sum in his pocket he commenced, on horseback, a ride of three hundred miles, and reached his destination with five cents unexpended.

At the Conference he appears to have taken but little part in the public debates, though he was attentive to all the business brought before the body; and he preached in several of the churches with so much acceptance, that, by the urgent request of the people, Bishop Asbury transferred him from his circuit and gave him the pastoral charge of the church in Light-street, in the city of Baltimore. Here he maintained his reputation, and, after two years, was transferred to Fell's Point, thence to Alexandria, then to Georgetown; and in the years 1813-14 he was stationed in the city of Philadelphia. The year following he was made presiding elder of the Schuylkill District, and there being

no bishop at the session of the Annual Conference in 1816, Mr. Roberts was chosen to preside over the deliberations of that body.

In this position our unlettered backwoodsman first evinced his peculiar talent as a presiding officer. Calm, courteous, and perfect master of the rules for the government of deliberative bodies, all present, including many of the delegates from New-York and New-England, who were on their way to the General Conference at Baltimore, were perfectly charmed with him; so that, at the meeting of that body, he was elected, on the 14th of May, 1816, one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

His consecration to this high office made no difference in his frugal habits or his unsophisticated simplicity of character. In preference to residing within the limits of a large city, or even a central village, as many of his friends thought desirable, he located himself in the log-cabin, built by his own hands previous to his entrance upon the ministry. It had, indeed, undergone some repairs, and was somewhat enlarged when it became the episcopal residence. It was the abode of cheerfulness and hospitality, but far from being what the denizens of a metropolis would esteem comfortable. Thence he emigrated with his family to the State of Indiana, where, in the wilderness, another log-cabin had been erected for him by his brother. It was eighteen miles from the nearest mill, and their first night's rest in this new abode, where the bishop continued to reside until his death, was disturbed by the howling of the wolves. In the intervals of the Annual Conferences he devoted himself to the clearing of the woods around his dwelling, to hunting, of which he was always fond, and to the cultivation of the soil. During his whole life he might with truth

have said, "These hands have ministered to my necessities and to them that were with me."

At the same time, owing to his economical habits and his industry, he had it in his power to be hospitable and to enjoy, to some extent, the luxury of giving. Knowing the importance of education from his own lack of it, he made, during his lifetime, liberal donations to our principal seminaries of learning, and at his death made the Asbury University his residuary legatee.

In his journeyings from one Conference to another, which, until the last few years of his life, he performed on horseback, he seldom made himself known to the people among whom he tarried for rest or refreshment. His appearance was that of an honest, well-meaning farmer, simple and unobtrusive. Occasionally some direct question would cause him to reveal himself; but more frequently not until he had gone on his way did those with whom he stopped know that they had been entertaining an angel unawares.

On one of his Southern tours he reached a village in Virginia where, as he had no personal acquaintances, he stopped at a public house; and on the next day, which was the Sabbath, went to church, where, seated among the congregation, he listened to a sermon from a Methodist preacher. Another clergyman of the same denomination closed the service, with whom the bishop, being a respectable-looking stranger, was invited home to dinner. They discoursed together of the sermon they had heard, and the bishop, with his usual modesty, answered the questions which were proposed to him. At dinner the young preacher asked a blessing, and continued catechizing his guest as to whence he came, his business, and whither he

was going; and finally, said he, "What is your name?"

"My name," said the bishop, "is Roberts."

"Roberts! ah, hum," inquired his host, "Roberts? Any relation of Robert R. Roberts, one of our bishops?"

"That is my name," said the stranger.

The surprise of the young man may be imagined, but the benignity of the good bishop soon put him at his ease.

A somewhat similar incident the bishop was himself in the habit of telling, though he carefully suppressed the names of the parties concerned. He was stopping at a tavern for a night on one of his journeys, and, after having partaken of his supper, the landlord and other members of the family proposed to leave him alone while they went to meeting.

"What kind of a meeting is it?" asked the stranger.

"It is what we call a class-meeting."

"If it would not be intruding, I should like to go with you."

To this no objection was made, and the bishop accompanied them. The leader was a young man, full of zeal and of very fair talents. After addressing the members of the class individually he came to the bishop, when the following conversation ensued:—

Leader. Well, stranger, have you any desire to serve the Lord and get to heaven?

Bishop. I have such a desire.

Leader. How long have you had this desire?

Bishop. I cannot say precisely, but for many years.

This put the leader upon his mettle, and he continued, "Well, do you think, old gentleman, that you know anything about experimental religion?"

were then upon him, and the premonitions of disease warned him that his work was almost done.

On the following Sabbath he was again induced to preach. His text was, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." It was his last sermon. He retired from the sanctuary, and after a season of suffering, borne with exemplary patience, in his own log-cabin in the wilds of Indiana, the senior bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church rested from his labours.

His death was, as might have been expected, calm and peaceful. One asked him, when the symptoms indicated the near approach of the last struggle, if he had any anxiety about the matter. He said, "No. There are some temporal affairs I would like to see adjusted; but I have no fears. I think I have an assurance, should I die, that I shall be at rest." He then added, with much earnestness, "But I have no plea or righteousness of my own. I feel that I am an unprofitable servant, but I die firmly in the belief of those doctrines I have been preaching for more than forty years." There was no outburst of ecstatic joy, but a holy resignation, an undoubting trust, and an unwavering reliance upon the atoning blood of Christ; and with the same heavenly expression upon his countenance with which it was wont to be lighted up when he poured forth the gushing emotions of his soul in proclaiming the gospel message, he met the last enemy; and, in the language of a favourite hymn,

"Dying, found his latest foe
Under his feet at last."

"It has been my lot," says one who had the privilege of being present, "to witness many death-bed scenes, but

before, NONE LIKE THIS. We did not feel that we were standing by the bed of death, but that we were the honoured witnesses of the exaltation of our beloved bishop to the joy of his Lord.”

His body was deposited in a lonely field on his own farm; but the voice of the Church in which he had been a preacher of righteousness for forty-one years, and twenty-seven a bishop, was loud in expressions of dissatisfaction with the spot chosen for his last resting-place. The people of Baltimore were desirous that his remains should be removed with the ashes of Asbury, which rest under the pulpit of one of the churches in that city. Cincinnati and several other towns and villages at the West, preferred their claims for the same honour, but it was finally agreed that the body should be disinterred and removed to the cemetery of the institution he so much loved—the Asbury University. This was done in accordance with the unanimous request of the Indiana Conference, as expressed in some touching resolutions adopted by those who felt most keenly that in his departure they had been bereaved of a friend and a father.

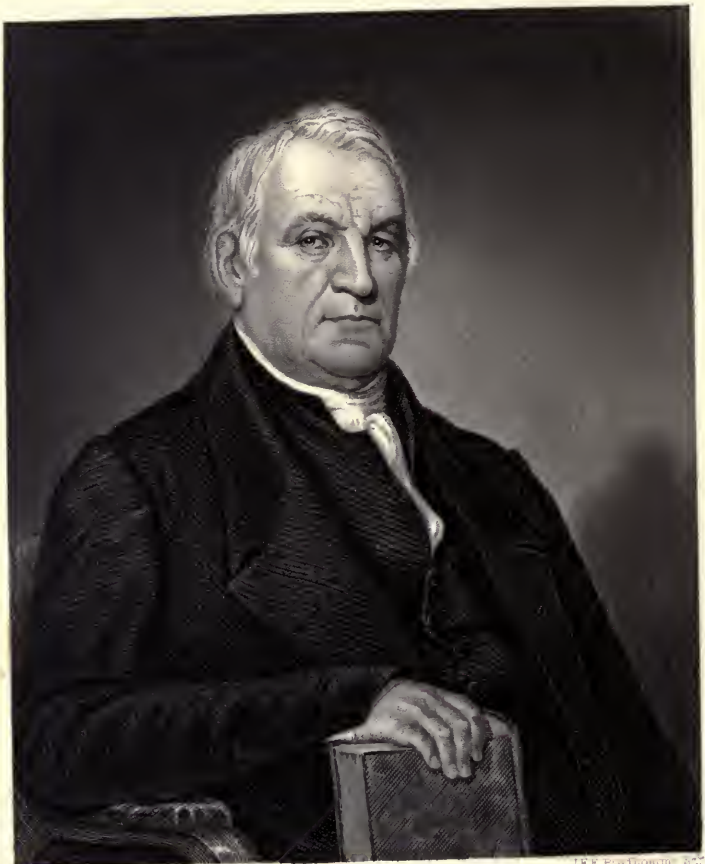
There, on a beautiful spot, within the enclosure of the college-grounds, with a chaste monument, bearing an epitaph from the pen of one of his colleagues in the episcopacy, his body awaits the summons of the last trumpet.

As the reader will have gathered from this brief sketch, the two most distinguishing traits in the character of Bishop Roberts were modesty and fidelity; the one bordering at times upon diffidence, the other always and everywhere unswerving. Perhaps no man was so much surprised as himself when he was first spoken of for the episcopal office; and no one in our own Church, or in any

other, has worn the dignity with more unassuming meekness. To the General Conference of 1836 he offered, in all sincerity, the surrender of his episcopal prerogatives; not because of weariness in the arduous toils they imposed upon him, nor on account of bodily infirmity, but because he deemed so many of his brethren in the eldership of the Church better qualified than himself for the duties of the office. That body promptly and wisely declined to accept his resignation. They assumed the right of differing from him in opinion on that subject, and he never stood higher in the affection and esteem of his brethren in the ministry and of the entire Church than on that day. While he was thus practically illustrating the admonition of the apostle, "In honour preferring one another," in him was also verified the Saviour's declaration, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It is the testimony of one who was afterward called to the same office, "In him the bishop did not spoil the man nor mar the Christian, nor by exalting minify the minister. The apostle did not hinder the disciple. If *primus inter pares*, he did not forget the fact that *his peers placed him first*, and that, through them, the Holy Ghost had made him overseer."

But his faithfulness in the discharge of every duty, his fidelity to the best interests of the Church, to those over whom his episcopal supervision extended, and to his God, was the crowning glory of his life, and the trait of character which all may imitate, in whatever portion of the vineyard the Master may see fit to employ them. All the energies of his soul and body were consecrated to the service of the Church, and he has received that plaudit which may be thine also, reader, whether thou hast ten talents or but one: "Well done, good and *faithful* servant."





L. P. 1847

J. E. Partridge del.

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON HENNINGSEN

Portrait of Wm. Livingston Henningesen

Elijah Hedding,

LATE SENIOR BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

IN this brief pen-and-ink portrait of the late Bishop Hedding, we shall not attempt to give the likeness of the man, drawn from opinion. Our purpose is to sketch what he was in a few selected *facts* from his history. If we succeed in this purpose, he will furnish us an instance of the influence of piety and industry, united with sound common-sense, in giving a noble character, a distinguished position, and eminent usefulness to their subject. We shall find him rising from an humble origin, without artificial aid, and with many disabilities in the way of success, by the force of his own worth, through the grace of God, from the retired condition of a Green Mountain farm-boy, to sit, in the honour of the Episcopal office, among the princes of Israel; and with a name in the Church, the mention of which is "as ointment poured forth."

What were his qualifications to become a minister? How did they fit him for the demand of his times? These are the two questions naturally first presented, and which we shall first attempt to answer. We shall then be at no loss to determine why "God counted him worthy, putting him into the ministry." It will be necessary, in this attempt, to give a little attention to his early life.

call upon young Hedding, who was a good reader, to read one of Wesley's sermons, or a selection from Baxter's Call. By this means he became quite intimate with this Zachariah and Elizabeth. These public readings had a good influence upon him. They served to continue in his mind his early impressions of religious things; they gave him confidence to appear in public; and, as he says, "I took great pride in these readings;" they probably were a school in elocution that improved his style of address for after life. The pious woman of this house showed an interest in young Hedding that led her, on many occasions, to seek his conversion. After he had finished reading, and the people had left the house, she would often detain him, and converse with him about what he had been reading, or immediately about the concerns of his soul.

He derived another, and no inconsiderable advantage from his intimacy with this elect family. Books, especially religious books, were very scarce in that new country, and they had brought with them quite a large library, embracing about all the books then published by the Methodists, both in England and America. To this library he had free access, and he borrowed and read, until he became familiar with all the writings on Wesleyan theology or Christian experience. Who shall say that his love of reading in subsequent life, and his future eminence as a clear vindicator of the doctrines of his Church, had not their origin in his habits of study of the books borrowed from this lone Methodist family?

For nearly three years the Sabbath services were continued in the manner we have described, when the Methodist itinerants, ever seeking "the regions beyond," first made their appearance in that part of Vermont lying between

the Green Mountains and Lake Champlain, and formed the Vergennes Circuit. Once in six weeks they visited Starksboro', and preached on Sabbath in the log-house of the pious family to which we have referred. Reading and prayer were continued on the intervening Sabbaths as formerly. The labours of the circuit preachers were followed by the conversion of hundreds. To this time young Hedding had successfully resisted the frequent deep convictions that he felt while reading the books he had borrowed, or under the personal exhortations of the truly religious woman of whom we have written; but he could resist no longer. One Sabbath, after he had read in public as usual, and she had endeavoured privately to impress the truths he had read upon his mind, while on his way homeward he turned into a wood by the roadside, and, kneeling beside a great tree, vowed to God to part with all his idols, and seek the salvation of his soul with all his heart. Soon after this, while listening to a sermon from Mr. Mitchell, the circuit preacher, he was, to use his own language, "so affected with a sense of his sinfulness of heart and life he could not help roaring aloud." In much this state of mind he continued for six weeks. He then heard Mr. Mitchell again, and remained after preaching to class. "While in this meeting," he says, "and while the friends were engaged in prayer for me, I found peace of soul, and my conscience was at rest. It was the 27th of December, 1798, and I immediately gave my name as a probationer in the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the next visit of Mr. Mitchell to the place, while in conversation with him respecting the witness of the Spirit, the light of the Spirit broke in upon my mind, clear and perceptible as the light of the sun when it comes from behind a cloud, testifying that I was born of God, and that it was

at the time I have before named." So unequivocal and marked were his convictions, his conversion, and the testimony of the Spirit thereto. Almost immediately he obeyed the irrepressible desire that he felt, and began to speak of the grace of God in him, and to pray and exhort in the public meetings. In the summer following he received license as an exhorter, and soon after, at the earnest solicitation of the preachers, went, in the capacity of an exhorter, for a few months to fill a vacancy that had occurred in Essex Circuit, on the western side of the lake. His labours in these three months were attended with great success, and some hundreds professed conversion. Having filled the time of his engagement, he returned home to his former occupation on the farm.

From the time of his conversion, Mr. Hedding often had serious impressions that it would be his duty to preach the gospel. The preachers frequently told him it was his duty, and once, at a quarterly conference, a license to preach was offered him ; but he uniformly replied that he was not satisfied that God had called him, and he would not run before he was sent. His views of the great responsibilities of the minister's calling, and the necessity for eminent qualifications, as well as a special appointment from God himself for the work, and, withal, his views of personal unfitness, made him unwilling to believe it his duty whenever the subject was presented to his mind. Still he could not divest his mind of the impression that he ought to preach, and waited for God to make it known to him in such a manner that he could not doubt. He did not wait long. On one occasion, while at work in the barn, and thinking of an appointment he had, as an exhorter, on the following day, the conviction that he ought to preach at that meet-

ing, and the text that he should use, and the manner in which he should preach, was so clearly impressed on his mind that he durst not refuse. He obeyed the instructions with such comfort to his own mind, and such indications from God that it was approved of the Spirit, that from that time he never doubted that he was called of God to the work of the ministry.

In the spring of 1800 he received license to preach, and in November following left his home to begin the work of a Methodist itinerant. He laboured by the appointment of a presiding elder till the ensuing spring, when he gave his name, and was admitted on probation in the New-York Conference, holding its session in John-street Church, in New-York city, the 16th of June, 1801.

A little attention to the incidents of his life already mentioned cannot fail to present him as one whom the Head of the Church would be likely to count worthy of the sacred office, and to exhibit something of his fitness for that office in reference to the times in which he lived. The doubt that then prevailed in the New-England mind, respecting a clear religious experience as the privilege of Christians, required that the minister, to be fully prepared for his work, should have a personal acquaintance with the operations of grace on his own heart, and be able to speak confidently "the things that he knew." We have seen how he was qualified to meet this prevailing doubt, and to "testify to things he had seen," from the manner that the Spirit of God affected his heart in childhood, and subsequently deeply convinced him of sin, and then genuinely effected his conversion, and clearly testified to his acceptance in the Beloved. Deism, Universalism, and Calvinism were the common forms of error

that then impregnated the public mind. The Methodist minister, in addition to his knowledge of the Bible, needed to have some acquaintance with the writings that clearly met and exposed the errors of these different *isms*. We have seen how Providence equipped Hedding, even before his conversion, with a good panoply from the library of the pious family of his neighbourhood. At almost every appointment the itinerant was met by formidable opponents, prepared for public cavil or debate. It was well for the young minister of the circuit to be accustomed to appearing before an audience, and to be familiar with public address. Let us not overlook the influence on young Hedding in this respect from the three years' reading on Sabbath-days to the company gathered in the log-cabin in Starksboro'. The long and severe rides, and the physical hardships and privations of itinerant life required that the Methodist ministers should be "giants in those days," or the brief service of a few years would prostrate and lay aside the most ardent herald of the truth. Mr. Hedding, reared in the hill country, nerved by the mountain breeze, and hardened by the toils of the farm, possessed a constitution, physically developed, that prepared him for herculean labour and unsurpassed endurance. It was not the least of his trials, while, with a glowing zeal, he sought the wandering sheep upon the mountains or in the valleys, and with scarcely the form of pecuniary recompense, that he was continually accused as a hireling, and called an intruder in other men's folds. But such slanders were powerless in deterring him from obedience to the call of duty, when he heard continually sounding in his ears, as first he heard it in his barn, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the gospel to *every creature*." With such qualifica-

tions for his work, and with a strong discriminating mind, a quick and clear perception of men and things, and a quenchless love for the souls of men and the glory of God, he gave himself to be, for life, an *itinerant minister*.

He spent the first six years of his ministry on Plattsburgh, Fletcher, Bridgewater, Hanover, Barre, and Ver-shire Circuits. These circuits covered each a large extent of territory, embracing from ten to fifteen townships, and required to be traversed at least once in four weeks, and some of them as often as once in two weeks. As Methodism was generally new and pioneer in its mission, he had frequently to introduce himself and his ministry in towns where the itinerant's voice had never been heard. During these six years he travelled usually not less than one hundred miles a week, and preached one or two sermons each week-day, and three sermons on the Sabbath.

An instance of his resolution to overcome difficulties, and his perseverance in prosecuting his work and meeting his engagements, occurred while he was on Fletcher Circuit. As the winter approached, and the country became very muddy, in some places frozen and in others not, his horse became lame and unable to proceed, except at the risk of his life, and to the injury of the beast. Unable to procure another horse, and unwilling to fail in his appointments, he went round the north part of the circuit, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, on foot, in two weeks, preaching once or twice daily, and with his feet wet most of the time, and his boots torn by the ice and frozen mud in the roads and swamps. He often spoke of this pedestrian enterprise in later years of his life. "I lived through it," said he, "but the exposures and hardships I endured I have never recovered from to this day."

The year that he travelled Bridgewater Circuit was one of the severest of his ministerial life. The circuit embraced thirteen townships, and he preached in each at least once in two weeks. He had hardly passed round the circuit, before there appeared indications of a powerful revival. So deeply were the people interested, that soon he was often driven to the barns and groves, that they might be accommodated. So absorbed were they to hear the word, that the scattered population would collect, even in harvest time, on horseback or on foot, for ten and fifteen miles around. At this time, when, as he once described it, "There was the greatest prospect of a sweeping revival that I have ever known," and when his own heart beat high with hopes for the success of the word, he was stricken down with disease. His first attack was dysentery in a malignant form, and so severe that most of his friends concluded that he must die. The good man of the house where he lay sick, without his knowledge, went thirty miles for the Presiding Elder to come and attend his funeral. But the disease took a favourable turn, and he had nearly recovered, when he was smitten down again with rheumatism. The complaint was very violent, and for six weeks he could not turn himself in bed, and most of that time could not stir hand or foot. It was four months before he could walk across his room. The effects of this disease remained with him; and for nearly fifty years the rheumatic pains were constantly reminding him of the long and painful hours he then suffered. To increase his affliction, the enemies of religion took opportunity, during his sickness, by slander and opposition, effectually to stop the work of God that had so prosperously begun.

Bishop Hedding was a master in the English language.

He was noted for the correctness of his pronunciation, the exactness of his definitions, and the integrity of his sentences. He always gave preference to pure Anglo-Saxon words. His thorough knowledge of his mother-tongue doubtless contributed greatly to his reputation as a preacher, or as an expounder of the law and discipline of the Church. He laid the foundation of this knowledge while he travelled Hanover Circuit. When a boy at school, he had been put to the study of English grammar, and compelled to commit to memory certain lessons; but he says, "I understood nothing of the system, and felt the inconvenience of my ignorance very seriously for the first three years that I travelled, and I determined if possible to overcome it. Having no one to teach me, and being unable to remain in the same neighbourhood more than two or three days at a time, I bought a copy of all the different books on grammar that I could find, and went into the study of it thoroughly." For three months he made no new sermons, but preached his old ones, and omitted all other reading. He carried his books on grammar in his saddle-bags; and early and late, at every opportunity, he gave his chief attention to their study, until, at the end of that time, he came to understand the whole system.

No sooner had he finished the grammar, than he began and read through, in course, and studied carefully, Perry's Dictionary. This dictionary was, at the time, the standard of pronunciation and definition in most of the colleges and schools. As he read it through in order to correct any errors in pronunciation, or in the application of words to which he was accustomed, he marked such words, wrote them off, and committed them to memory. He did the same thing with Perry's list of Scripture names; and he

says, "I found it very beneficial." A few years later, when Walker's Dictionary came to be the standard, he did the same with it, noting wherein they differed. Still later, he applied the same study to Webster's. As the result of this application, he could tell at once how any word was spelled and pronounced, and the nice shades of definition given to it by either Perry, Walker, or Webster.

We cannot refrain from narrating a novel and prompt way in which he settled a dispute between two members of the Church while he travelled Barre Circuit. In one of the societies on this circuit there were two brothers who had married sisters, and who were related to a majority of the members in the society. A dispute had arisen between them respecting some property, creating much bitterness of feeling, not only between themselves but other members of the Church. He determined, if possible, to effect a reconciliation and settlement, and to restore peace. For this purpose he called the society, about thirty or forty in number, together. Seated between these men, and the wife of each beside her husband, he began to talk over with them the matter in dispute. Soon one of the men charged the other with a lie. Immediately they both sprung to their feet to fight, and the women and many others present began to scream. Mr. Hedding, rising at the same time from his seat, with each hand seized a man by the collar, and, being stronger than either, held them apart. He then began to lecture them on the wickedness of their purposes, reminding them that they were kindred, and members of the same Church, and what a reproach they were bringing upon themselves and the Church, and how they were sinning against God. After he had somewhat calmed their feelings by his lecture and exhortation,

kneeling down, and pulling them on their knees beside him, and still holding each by the collar of his coat, he prayed earnestly and fervently for them. When he had finished praying, he moved the man he held in his right hand and said to him, "Now you pray." The man obeyed, and, confessing his sin, and asking God and his brother to forgive him, poured out his soul in supplication and tears. Mr. Hedding, moving the man he held in his left hand, then said to him, "And now you pray." He too, with crying and full confession of guilt, also asked God and his brother to forgive him. They then rose up, and Mr. Hedding said, "Now shake hands, and love one another as brethren, and let us hear no more of this difficulty as long as you live." They embraced each other and made mutual pledges of affection and faithfulness, and the whole society imitated their example. This peremptory and new method of settlement proved effectual, and these men lived for some years after, and died on terms of fraternal and Christian fellowship.

The General Conference of 1804 so altered the boundary line between the New-York and New-England Conferences that Mr. Hedding became a member of the latter Conference. He continued a member of that body until the time of his election to the episcopacy, in 1824. During all these years he filled, with distinguished usefulness and acceptance, either the appointments of presiding elder or stationed preacher. In 1807 and 1808 he was in charge of the New-Hampshire District. Here he had long rides, much work, and poor pecuniary support. The newness and ruggedness of the country, the want of financial organization on the circuits, and the poverty of the people, made it one of the hardest districts in the Methodist connexion. The first

year he received for his services, besides a small amount for travelling expenses, *four dollars and twenty-five cents!* With this he was expected to find his own horse, clothing, and books, and to travel not less than *three thousand miles*, and preach not less than *three hundred sermons!* Yet such was his zeal in the cause of his God, and his readiness to give himself to advance it, that, without a murmur or complaint, and with great cheerfulness, he took the same district, and with the same prospect, for the following year.

Mr. Hedding held a very sacred place in the affections and confidence of his brethren; yet truth requires us to say that once, though only once, he was the subject of a formal complaint, made against him at the Conference. The charge was of so *grave* a character as to deserve a passing notice. On one of the circuits of the New-Hampshire District there resided a doctor of medicine, a man of much shrewdness and talent, and a member of the Church. He came to Mr. Hedding with a written charge against one of the preachers of the circuit, requesting that a council might be called to try him. The charge was *superfluity of apparel*. The specifications were, *first*, the preacher wore silver knee-buckles in his small clothes; *second*, the preacher allowed his wife to wear a mourning veil, on account of the death of some relative. The doctor alleged that these were great grievances to himself and wife and other members of the society. Mr. Hedding told him that these were small matters, and all he could do would be to advise the preacher, for peace' sake, to leave off the buckles and use strings, and the wife, for the same reason, to leave off the veil. Having done this, he supposed it would be the end of the matter; but when he arrived at the follow-

ing Conference he found the doctor had forwarded a bill of charges against him, signed by himself and wife, *for refusing to administer discipline*. The doctor's letter was read to the Conference, and they, without debate, voted to dismiss it as unworthy of notice. This was the first and last complaint ever made against him at Conference.

On the 10th of June, 1810, he was married to Miss Lucy Blish, of Gypsum, New-Hampshire. He became acquainted with her when he travelled the Plattsburgh Circuit, in 1801, and they corresponded occasionally to the time of their marriage. Their long life of happiness and prosperity in the married relation is a sufficient evidence of the wisdom of his choice.

Some estimate can be formed of the position of Mr. Hedding in his own Conference, by the votes given him for a delegate to the General Conference in 1812. He, with one other, Rev. George Pickering, received every vote but one that was given. When the tellers announced the result of the balloting, Mr. Asbury, with characteristic good humour, remarked, "It is well these brethren lacked one vote, or we should know they voted for themselves." This was not the only expression of their exalted opinion of his merits given by the Conference. At every subsequent election of delegates, to the time when he was elected bishop, he in no instance lacked more than two votes of the whole number given.

Mr. Hedding was always ready to show his sympathy for, and to give his counsel and influence to promote, the temporal welfare of the Churches under his care. He showed his zeal and ability in this respect by his successful efforts to remove the financial embarrassments of the Churches in Boston in 1815. Both the Churches in

that city were held by one board of trustees, and were over eighteen thousand dollars in debt. The mortgages by which this debt was secured were already due, and the payment was demanded. The members of the Church were generally poor, and were in great distress and consternation, expecting every day that their houses of worship would be taken from them. Mr. Hedding and his colleague, Rev. D. Fillmore, turned on every side for relief, but apparently in vain. In this crisis of their affairs he applied for aid to a noble-hearted member, and the only one of much property in the Church. This man, who was largely engaged in business, offered, if Mr. Hedding and his colleague would find purchasers for the pews yet remaining unsold in the churches, to the amount of the debt, that he would take the notes of the purchasers, payable in such labour or merchandise as each could best pay, and he would himself advance the money to pay the mortgages. Doubtful of success, and yet determined to do all in their power in so difficult a work, these two men began the task, and unremittingly, from morning till evening, they traversed the city for some months, calling, not only on their own members, but on members of other Churches, as well as on those not members of any Church. To their great joy and surprise they succeeded. A day was appointed for the people to come and bid for the choice of pews and give their notes. The noble man who made the magnanimous offer, gave his check for the amount, the debt was cancelled, and the anxious Church had a day of thanksgiving and rejoicing.

Although he did not consider it a virtue to wear a dress of canonical shape; and had no sympathy for such a spirit of Pharisaism, Mr. Hedding always advocated and

admired simplicity and plainness of dress; and he contended that members of the Methodist Church, whatever their standing in society, ought to be so attired. Perhaps we cannot better give his views on this subject than by relating in his own words, from memory, an incident that occurred while he was stationed in Boston:—"A lady called on me one Monday morning in Boston, and said she came to offer herself to join my Church. She was very gayly and expensively dressed. On inquiry, I learned that she was the wife of a wealthy merchant in the city, and niece of Ex-Governor Hancock; that she had been led to seek the Lord from reading Wesley's sermons, which she found in her kitchen, and which belonged to a domestic who was a member of our Church. She had been the day before to hear me preach, as she said, to see if I preached as Wesley preached; and, being satisfied that I did, she wished to be one of his people. I told her there would be an opportunity to join the Church on the following Sabbath, but that she ought to know well the character and manners of the people before she joined. 'I perceive,' said I, 'that you are very gayly dressed, and our people are a plain people; moreover, our rules require plainness in all who unite with us, and, if you were to continue to dress as you now are, it would give great offence to the Church; and you should consider this.' She said she had read our Discipline, and made up her mind to conform to it. On the following Sabbath she presented herself to be received, attired as neatly as I ever wish to see any one, joined the Church, and lived for several years, till her death, a devout and consistent Christian."

The first religious and family paper, published under the patronage of the Church, was established by the New-

England Conference. Mr. Hedding was among the original movers in this work, and was one of the committee appointed by the Conference in 1822 to take measures for its publication. Being the only one of the committee residing in or near Boston, the greater part of the labour devolved upon him. With characteristic zeal and prudence he attended to his duties, and *Zion's Herald* soon made its appearance.

The General Conference in 1824 elected him a bishop. The circumstances attending this election reflected great credit on himself, and the successful manner in which for nearly thirty years he discharged his official duties, shows the good judgment of those who voted to raise him to the office. It is but the truth to say that the election of a bishop at that time depended on a party vote. Each General Conference from 1812 to 1824 was much agitated by the discussion of the subject popularly known as "the Presiding-Elder Question." So much interest was taken in this question that it divided the Conferences into two parties, and naturally affected the general elections; one party, chiefly from the South, contending that the presiding elders should be appointed by the bishops, and the other advocating their election by their respective Annual Conferences. Mr. Hedding was of the latter party. He first appeared, with prominence, in the discussions on this subject in 1816, and again in 1820. A contemporary says of him: "As a disputant he was self-possessed, clear, candid, and convincing." He made so favourable an impression on the minds of his brethren who agreed with him on the subject in controversy, that, in the latter year, they nominated him as their candidate for election to the episcopal office. The state of parties

was such at the time, that had he consented to the nomination, there is scarcely a doubt but he would have been elected. In vain, however, they urged him to consent. He peremptorily declined.

At the General Conference in 1824, the state of the work requiring the election of two bishops, he was again put forward by his friends, and nominated for the office. Although disinclined to allow his name to be used, he did not feel at liberty so positively to refuse as he had done at the preceding Conference. He was elected. The vote surprised him, and, rising in his place, with much embarrassment he stated to the Conference that he doubted whether the state of his health, and his views of the great responsibilities of the office, and his sense of personal unfitness, would allow him to consent to be ordained. He would, however, take time to consider the matter; and retired from the Conference. While walking in the rear of the church where the Conference was in session, meditating on the nature of his position, and praying for direction in the path of duty, he received a message, signed by the secretary of the Conference, that immediately gave decision to his mind. This message was the copy of a resolution offered by two prominent Southern men that he knew were leaders on the opposite side to himself in the prevailing controversy, and passed unanimously by the Conference. It expressed their sense of his fitness for the episcopal office, and also a request that he would consent to be ordained, and not allow any feeling of unworthiness to prevent him from obeying the voice of the Church. After receiving this testimony of the unanimous wish of his brethren, he could no longer hesitate, and was ordained bishop on the 28th of May, 1824. From this time forward

he occupied a prominent position in the councils of the Church, and increased every year in the esteem and affection of the ministry and people.

Many years after his election, when the excitement from ultra doctrines and measures made him the subject of attack, Bishop Hedding was often charged with holding sentiments favouring the system of American slavery. But one of his official acts in 1826, when the subject of slavery did not agitate the Church or country, will at least clearly exhibit what were his views respecting slaveholding in the ministry. As near as memory serves we give the account of it in his own words:—

“The General Conference in 1824 voted that the bishops should appoint a delegate to the Wesleyan body in England in 1826, and we met in the spring of that year to make the appointment. When we assembled it was found that one of our number was unable to attend. The four bishops present proceeded to nominate the delegate. Two of them named an eminent man of the South, who was known to be a slaveholder. The other two, of whom I was one, objected to the appointment of this man on the ground of his personal connexion with slavery, alleging that it would embarrass him as a delegate in England, and would give a precedent to the promotion of slaveholders to office, and, at the same time, nominated another distinguished minister who would be free from such objections. The two bishops who had nominated the man from the South refused to yield their nomination, or to concur with ours, because, as they contended, slaveholding should not be a bar to any office in the appointment of the Church. In this state of things, neither side being willing to yield, and being equally divided in our choice, we agreed to adjourn till the follow-

ing year, when the absent bishop could meet with us. The next year we all met, and it was found that those of us who had been together the year before remained of the same mind. The other bishop was unwilling to take the responsibility of giving the casting vote, and after two days' delay decided that we had not authority to make the appointment in 1827, since the General Conference voted it should be done in 1826, and we adjourned without sending the delegate."

Bishop Hedding, though a man of eminent prudence, and averse to controversy and dispute, had, nevertheless, an opinion that, at proper times, he was ready to express on any question that involved the well-being of the cause of Christ; and he feared no personal reproach or opposition when he believed it would be beneficial to interpose his judgment and counsel to arrest the imprudence of party zeal, or to maintain doctrines and measures calculated to preserve the integrity of the Church.

Lay delegation in the Conferences was a greatly agitated question in some portions of the Church about the time of his election. In the Pittsburgh Conference many of the leading members were in favour of such a measure. When he attended its session, in August, 1826, finding such intense feeling on the subject as to threaten the disruption of the body, he addressed them in reference to the matter, warning them of the evil of some of their measures, and exhorting them to moderation and calmness in their discussion of the agitated question. For this address he was publicly attacked and misrepresented, and, as the bishop believed, to the injury of his character and influence, and to the hurt of the Church. Having sought in vain for reparation in the

same paper where the attack and misrepresentations had been made, he called the attention of the General Conference to the subject in 1828. The committee on episcopacy, to whom the matter was referred, after hearing the statements of the delegates from the Pittsburgh Conference and the bishop's own statement of the address, as recollected by himself, declared that the writer of the offensive publication "had injuriously misrepresented Bishop Hedding, and that the address of the bishop was not only not deserving of censure, but such as the circumstances of the case rendered it his official duty to deliver."

Bishop Hedding was remarkable for the gentlemanly simplicity of his manners. He conceived that the highest praise which he or any man could receive was the testimony of being a *faithful, approved, and successful Methodist minister*. He shrunk from the idea of superior claim, or making pretension to superior privileges, because of his office. Wherever he travelled among strangers, though always ready to avow himself a Methodist preacher, he never introduced himself as a bishop. This often led him, greatly to his amusement and sometimes to his inconvenience, to discover that some men who would be patronizing and condescending to *the preacher*, could be servile and humble to *the bishop*. We venture to narrate an instance of this kind. Travelling with a horse and sulky, on one of his long rides from Conference to Conference, he came, on Saturday afternoon, to a manufacturing village near the western part of the State of Massachusetts. As was his custom where he knew no private member of the Church in the place, he went direct to the stationed preacher's, and found him absent. Next he went to the public-house, and, while his horse was feeding, inquired of the landlord who

were the principal Methodists in the place. He was referred to one of the large manufacturers of the village, as the landlord said, "the richest man in the place," who lived not far off in a splendid mansion. He walked to the house, and found the lady of the "richest man" at home. Having introduced himself as a Methodist preacher on a journey, he stated that he designed to remain in the place over Sabbath; and, preferring to stay with some of the brethren than at a tavern, he had called to see if it would be convenient for them to accommodate him. She said, with common civility, she would send to the factory for her husband. He soon came, and showed, by his haughty and forbidding air, that he felt he was the "chief man of the village." The bishop again stated his object in calling, and, after sitting some time without receiving a reply, arose to depart, when the man said, "I suppose we can let you stay." The bishop replied, "If it is convenient I will; but if not, I would not be a burden."

"O," said the man, "I guess you can stay."

The bishop, who by this time had taken the measure of his host, and more to test his hospitality than save his pence, said, "I have a horse at the tavern; if you have a barn and feed I will bring him."

"We have hay," said the man, "but no grain."

"Well," said the bishop, "I can bring grain from the tavern, if your hay is good."

"It is good enough for *your* horse," was the quick reply.

The man returned to his factory, and the bishop went to the tavern, bought the oats, and brought the horse and put him in the barn. He spent the remainder of the afternoon and evening without being favoured with much of the society of "mine host" or his lady. When he came to

retire for the night he was shown to a small attic-room, in a wing of the splendid mansion, with two beds in it, with three apprentices just from the factory for room-mates, and one of them for a bed-fellow, all of whom seemed to partake of the spirit of their master, and treated the bishop as unwelcome and an intruder. He felt ere this quite inclined to remove to the tavern, but a disposition to see the end prevailed, and he remained. In the morning his host said to him, "There is to be a love-feast at the church; maybe you would like to go."

"Certainly," said the bishop; and they proceeded to the church. He had been seated but a few moments in the congregation when the preacher came in and took his seat in the altar. His host went and spoke to him, and the bishop perceived that he was directing the preacher's attention to himself. The preacher, rising up hastily and opening wide his eyes, exclaimed, so as to be distinctly heard in the house, "*It's the bishop! It's the bishop!*" It need not be stated that the bishop was invited to take charge of the love-feast, and preached the morning sermon. The service being over he left the house; and his host, evidently mortified and chagrined, walked for some distance by his side, when suddenly, with a half-vexed and half-fawning tone, he exclaimed, "Why did'nt you tell me you were a bishop?" The bishop simply said, "I am but a Methodist preacher, and entitled to no more civility or attention than the humblest of my brethren." His host pressed him with suppliant earnestness to stay to dinner, but he preferred to dine elsewhere.

His labours for the first eight years of episcopal service were very arduous. His extensive travel and frequent preaching, besides presiding in more than fifty Conferences,

and making the appointments of the preachers, together with the care and responsibility continually resting upon him, seemed to him more than his health and strength could sustain, and he seriously meditated resigning his office at the General Conference in 1832. He would not, however, take so important a step without consulting with his brethren, the delegates from the New-York and New-England Conferences. They expressed it as their unanimous opinion that he ought wholly to relinquish the idea of ever resigning the episcopal office, or of discontinuing the exercise of it at any time, unless under some imperious dispensation of Providence compelling him to do so. Yielding to their advice, he continued to attend to his episcopal duties with accustomed zeal and faithfulness.

Any sketch of the character or life of Bishop Hedding would be very incomplete without a notice of the trials through which he passed in the performance of his official duties, from 1836 to 1841. These were years of threatening excitement, that affected many of the Northern and Eastern Conferences, arising from the doctrines and measures of abolitionism. For some reason it became his duty, more than of any of his colleagues, to have the charge of those Conferences where ultra measures on the agitating subject were attempted. This may have arisen from the fact that he had an extended personal acquaintance with the members of those Conferences, and could therefore keep a salutary check on any plans that might prove destructive to the peace and unity of the Church; or, it might be that his known prudence and good judgment, sustained by his ability as a presiding officer, were supposed to be a sure guarantee that he would not suffer the cause of God to be jeopardded by any rashness in the leaders of the agita-

tion. It would have been ground of thankfulness to him; if he could have been excused from the painful labours, through which duty required him to pass, in these five years of fearful excitement. But he was the last man to yield the post to which duty assigned him. Many things contributed to distress his mind in these troublous times. Some of those who led the agitation were his old and intimate friends; and it grieved his soul to see those with whom he had laboured for years in intimate fellowship and peace embracing sentiments and advocating measures that he fully believed would injure themselves, as well as hurt the cause of God; and he was pained to be compelled to remonstrate with them, and to warn them of the evil that he saw inevitably following their course. He dearly loved the Church, and his heart sickened as he saw the devastation produced by the alienations, suspicions, and hostilities among brethren, through the intemperate discussions that were had on the disturbing subject. He became himself the object of attack: for doing what he believed to be his duty, and what the interests of religion imperatively required, he was loaded with reproaches, and slanders. Some of the leaders of the agitation followed him from Conference to Conference, and, by publications and harangues, called in question the integrity of his sentiments, and impeached his administration as tyrannical and oppressive. Undaunted, he swerved nothing from the line of duty. To the young and deceived he was patient, forbearing, and paternal in his counsels; to the intractable and obstinate he was decided and prompt in his warnings; and after a few years he had the happiness to see the threatened storm pass by, and the satisfaction of knowing that his faithful administration had proved effectual in restoring harmony to the

troubled Churches. It was a favourite plan of his opponents, during this agitation, to attempt in various ways to embarrass him as presiding officer; but all their attempts were promptly met and frustrated. The crafty were often taken in their own net. One of many instances of the kind will be given:—He had stated in a public address on discipline, that it might be the duty of a bishop, in case a majority of the members of a Conference should embrace erroneous or heretical doctrines, or become addicted to any sinful practices, and therefore could not be impartially tried in their own Conference, to transfer a portion of them to some other Conference, where they could be fairly tried. A member of a New-England Conference, who soon after left the Church and embraced the wild vagaries of a modern delusion, introduced a preamble and resolution for the action of the Conference, which, having stated the doctrine as taught by the bishop, went on further to say: “And whereas many of the preachers in the Southern conferences are so far connected with slavery, and are slaveholders, that they cannot be impartially tried in their own conferences for any violations of the discipline on that subject, therefore, *Resolved*, that Bishop Hedding be *respectfully* requested to transfer such preachers to Northern conferences, where the discipline in their case may be impartially administered.” He immediately saw the mischievous design of the resolution, and, rising from his chair, said: “Well, brethren, if you are prepared for the resolution, I am ready to put it. But you must bear in mind, that if we transfer men from the South to the North, we must also transfer men from the North to the South, to fill their places. We now need a preacher in New-Orleans, and the first man I transfer will be brother R——, the mover of the resolution.

Are you ready for the question?" A motion was immediately made to lay the preamble and resolution on the table, and the friends of brother R—— were glad to vote for it; and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Christian magnanimity, that would not allow him to cherish resentment for any injury inflicted on himself, was a noble trait in the character of Bishop Hedding. He could not but feel the smart, but he forgave the offender. His was the spirit of his Master, who, with a liberal charity, was ever ready to say of his opposers, "They know not what they do." He showed this magnanimity toward his brethren of the New-England Conference at the General Conference in 1840. That conference, as much as any other, had attempted disorganizing measures, and, by resolutions and votes, had implicated and endeavoured to embarrass his administration. He believed that the most of its members had seen the error of their course, and at this General Conference interposed to prevent any censure being cast upon them.

The Committee on Itinerancy, to whom is intrusted the examination of the records of the several Annual Conferences, made a report, in the preamble of which they accused the New-England Conference, for the four years preceding, of being "disorganizing in their proceedings, and to have pursued a course destructive to the peace, harmony, and unity of the Church." When the question came for the adoption of the report, and it was probable that it would be adopted, Bishop Hedding, forgetful of the reproach which the hasty action of that Conference had cast upon him, with an earnest apology or plea in its behalf, prevailed on the General Conference to lay the report on the table.

As a presiding officer in the Conferences, Bishop Hed-

ding had no superior. His knowledge of business, and his thorough acquaintance with the rules that govern deliberative bodies, qualified him in an eminent degree for the duties of a president. An instance of this was given while presiding at the session of the General Conference in 1840. A motion, in which considerable interest was felt, was put by him, and the vote declared to be a tie. He was called upon to give the casting vote, but declined, saying, that though he had no objection to express his opinion on the question before the conference, in a proper way, he did not believe it lawful for a bishop to vote in the General Conference. This declaration created some astonishment, and the more as it had been done by other presidents, in other cases. But he went on to give his reasons, from analogy, so clear and convincing, that not a member of the body doubted the correctness of his decision.

He regarded the election to the episcopacy as an election to *office*, and though, in the nature of the case, not properly an office for frequent change, as many inferior appointments, yet by no means requiring the continuance of the incumbent when health or other causes called for resignation. With such views, and suffering much from acute or chronic disease, he often consulted with his brethren on the propriety of resigning his office, and, at different times, even to the last General Conference he attended, intimated to that body a doubt if the state of his health would justify them in expecting him to do effective service, and a readiness to resign. But the Church had too high an opinion of his worth as a counsellor, and too grateful a remembrance of his faithfulness in all the trusts she had confided to him, to think for a moment of allowing him to resign; and, at different General Conferences,

when he referred the subject to them, voted that he should be expected to perform such service only as he should judge his health would permit him to do. He continued, however, an effective bishop, presiding in Conferences, fixing the appointments of the preachers, and giving, orally or by letter, such official counsel as the functions of his office required, to within a short time before his death.

As the several primary rays of light in proper combination form a pure white, so the happy union and proportion of his many noble qualities gave to Bishop Hedding a completeness of character. From whatever point he is observed—whether as a man, a Christian, a minister, or a bishop—he seems entire and without fault. “His mind, naturally clear and discriminating, had been well-matured by reading and study, by intercourse with men, and by a large and well-improved experience. He was possessed of great simplicity and sincerity of manner, a peculiar and confiding openness in his intercourse with his brethren, that at once won their confidence and affections. At the same time, his natural dignity and great discretion made him an object of reverence as well as of affection. His great shrewdness, and his almost instinctive insight into the character of men, guarded him from becoming the dupe of the crafty and designing. His heart was as true as it was large in its sympathies. His brethren never in vain sought his counsel or his sympathy. The soundness of his views upon the doctrines and discipline of the Church was so fully and universally conceded, that in the end he became almost an oracle in these respects; and his opinions are regarded with profound veneration. As a theologian and divine, his views were comprehensive, logi-

cal, and well-matured. His discourses were an example of neatness, order, perspicuity, and completeness. He had a most tenacious memory. His mind was richly stored with incident and anecdote, as well as with all kinds of the most valuable knowledge, collected from books, from observation, and from experience. His conversational powers were of a high order—the events of the past seemed to start up from their lurking places, and come forth with all the freshness and life of recent occurrences. There was often with him a genial sprightliness, humour, and wit, and a keen sense of the ludicrous, that made him a most companionable friend. Yet his cheerfulness never descended below the purity of the Christian character, or the dignity of the Christian man. His, too, was a most liberal and catholic spirit. He toiled long and hard to build up the Church of his early choice; and his affections were deeply wedded to that Church; but they were not exclusive. He felt a kindred sympathy for Christians of every name, and felt, too, that he was with them a common partner in the kingdom and patience of Christ Jesus. His nature was too noble, his heart too large, and his views too broad and enlightened to admit of his being cut off from sympathy with the common brotherhood of the Christian faith. Yet he felt that God had appointed him to his sphere of labour, and it was his highest joy to pursue it.”*

The first acute attack that proved the premonitor of approaching death was on the 28th of December, 1850. From this time, for more than fifteen months, “his decline was gradual, sometimes relieved by favourable indications, and at other times accelerated by sudden and alarming

* Quarterly Review, January, 1853.

steps." His intellect, notwithstanding his intense and protracted bodily sufferings, remained clear and vigorous to the last. "His conversation during the last months and weeks of his life was heavenly and edifying beyond degree." To different brethren in the ministry who were privileged to visit him in his last sickness, he often spoke of his love for the Church, of the sufficiency of the atonement, and of his joy and confidence as he trusted in it alone for salvation. He spoke of heaven, and of his assurance that he was going thither. He exhorted them to preach Christ while they had life and strength. The nearer the final moment approached, the brighter seemed his prospects of the glorious world to which he hastened. Almost the last uttered sentences of the victorious Christian minister and bishop were, "Glory, glory! Glory to God! glory to God! glory to God! Glory! I am happy—filled!" He died on the 9th of April, 1852.





Engraved by E. Mackenzie

John Fletcher.

CHRISTIANITY did for the Rev. JOHN FLETCHER all that it can do for an inhabitant of this earth. It fulfilled in him every precept of the decalogue, and every beatitude of the sermon on the mount. Whatever the gospel makes a duty he performed, whatever it promises as a privilege he enjoyed. In life and death he may have had a few equals, but no superior throughout the Christian age. His life was like the sea of glass in the Apocalypse, and his death like the same sea "mingled with fire."

He was born at Nyon, in Switzerland, Sept. 12th, 1729. Like every boy that has ever grown to manhood, he was frequently in imminent peril. At one time he was practising the art of fencing with his brother, who nearly killed him by a thrust of his sword, which split the button on the point of it, and entered his side. At another time, he fell from a high wall, and was barely saved by a bed of mortar which broke the violence of his fall. Once he was swimming in deep water, when a long hair-ribbon, becoming loose, twisted about his person, and nearly drowned him. One evening, in company with four others, he foolishly swam to a rock five miles from the shore, where they all nearly perished, not being able for some time to raise themselves out of the water. At another time he was carried

by the rapids of the Rhine a distance of five miles, when his breast struck one of the piles that supported a powder-mill, and for twenty minutes he floated senseless under the mill. Mr. Wesley believed that the preservation of his life among the piles was a miracle wrought by the power of angels. It was at least a manifest instance of a special providence, which, when human wisdom and strength can do no more, "keeps our soul in life." And who can distinguish this from a miracle?

Mr. Fletcher was educated principally at the University of Geneva, where his uncommon abilities bore away prize after prize from young gentlemen who were nearly related to the professors. Having accomplished the usual course, and gained the honours of the first class, his father wished him to enter the ministry. From his childhood he had secretly desired the holy office; but about the time of leaving the university, he changed his mind in favour of a military life. His parents remonstrated, but he persisted. He had learned to tremble at the thought of touching the ark, and preferred the dangers of the camp to the responsibilities of the Church. His parents were grieved and refused their consent. He started for Lisbon, and procured a commission in the Portuguese navy. A few days before the ship sailed, a maid, while serving him at the table, spilled the hot tea on his foot. The ship left without him, and was never after heard of. How much the Church is indebted to the blunder of an awkward girl! Yet,

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we will."

He returned from Lisbon, accepted a commission in the Dutch army, and immediately set out for Flanders; but

before he reached the camp, the war was suddenly closed by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. From that time he dismissed all thoughts of a military life, and thus in the providence of God, he who was designed for the service of the Prince of Peace was not permitted to become "a man of blood."

Soon after he laid by his sword—his "*unfleshed sword*," as the savage word now goes—he went to England, where, under the tuition of a Mr. Burchell, he studied the English language for eighteen months, and mastered it so thoroughly that Mr. Wesley thought no foreigner ever wrote it with greater purity and elegance. After this, he became a private tutor to the two sons of Mr. Thomas Hill, in Shropshire. It was during his connexion with this family that Mr. Fletcher first heard the Methodist name. Mr. Hill went to London to attend parliament, and took with him his family and young tutor. As they rode through St. Albans, Fletcher, who was on horseback, happened to meet a poor woman, who engaged him in religious conversation. The incident detained him for a long time behind his company. When he came up they inquired the cause of his delay. He answered that he had met with a poor woman, who talked so sweetly to him of Christ that he could not get away. "I shall wonder," said Mrs. Hill, "if our tutor does not turn Methodist." "Methodist, madam," said he; "what is that?" She replied, "They are a people who pray day and night." "Then," said he, "by the help of God I will find them, if they be above ground!"

Shortly after this he took the vows of God upon him for a life-long service. He had indeed feared God from childhood; but it was not till the twenty-fifth year of his age

that he experienced that great spiritual change which the New Testament describes as a "new birth," a "new creation," a "passing from death to life," and a calling "out of darkness into his marvellous light." The Scriptures clearly mark this as a new era of a man's life, an event, an epoch in his history, as distinctly defined as the commencement of civil manhood is defined by the laws of civilized nations. The account of this divine renewal we have from his own pen, but it is too long to be inserted in this brief sketch.* It is sufficient to say, that after many strong cryings with tears, much fasting, and much reading of the Scriptures, and many conversations with devout men, he rose from the dark land into light and joy. But the light was like the first faint rays of the dawn, and the joy was little more than the bare relief of a heavy heart. He prayed most devoutly that he might not be deceived as to the reality of his conversion. The prayer was soon answered. One day, while lying prostrate on the floor, his faith grew into a vision of Christ on the cross, and as he looked, he cried from the overwhelming joy of his heart:—

"Seized by the rage of sinful men,
I see Christ bound, and bruised, and slain—
'T is done, the martyr dies!
His life to ransom ours is given,
And lo! the fiercest fire of heaven
Consumes the sacrifice.

He suffers both from men and God,
He bears the universal load
Of guilt and misery!

* See Benson's Life of Fletcher—a piece of spiritual biography of unrivalled excellence. The late Dr. Fisk said he was more deeply indebted to it than to any other uninspired book.

He suffers to reverse our doom,
 And lo! my Lord is here become
 The Bread of Life to me!"

From that time he doubted no more. The darkness was past, and the true light shone with no dubious ray. He now began a life of unceasing mortification, and, as he afterward confessed, of unjustifiable austerity. He never slept while he could keep awake. He spent two whole nights in each week in reading, meditation, and prayer. He lived entirely on vegetables, and ate only enough of these to keep him on his feet. This severe treatment of himself he afterward regretted, as it injured his health and laid the foundation of future disease. Besides this, he said to Mrs. Fletcher, "When the body is brought low, Satan gains an advantage over the soul. It is certainly our duty to take all the care we can of our health. But at that time I did not seem to feel the want of the sleep I deprived myself of."

Not long after his conversion, the purpose of his childhood was renewed. His burning heart turned toward the ministry. But what enlightened man can think of that without trembling? His new conscience looked at it with a hundred eyes. Charles Wesley had sung a note of terror:—

"How ready is the man to go,
 Whom God has never sent!
 How cautious, diffident, and slow,
 His chosen instrument!"

Fletcher felt this deep in his heart. He wrote to Mr. Wesley:—

"I am in suspense. On one side, my heart tells me I must try; and tells me so whenever I feel any degree of

the love of God and man: on the other, when I examine whether I am fit for it, I so plainly see my want of gifts, and especially that *soul* of all the labours of a minister, love, continual, universal, flaming love, that my confidence disappears. I accuse myself of pride, to dare to entertain the desire of supporting the ark of God, and conclude that an extraordinary punishment will sooner or later overtake my rashness. As I am in both of these frames successively, I must own, sir, I do not see which of these ways before me I can take with safety, and shall gladly be ruled by you, because I trust God will direct you in giving me the advice you think will best conduce to his glory, which is the only thing I would have in view in this affair. I know how precious your time is, and desire no long answer. *Persist*, or *forbear*, will satisfy and influence, reverend sir, your unworthy servant,

J. F."

We are ignorant of Mr. Wesley's answer, yet think we could almost copy without having seen it. John Wesley could give but one answer to such a letter from John Fletcher. In substance it was, "*Persist*." On the 6th of March, 1757, he was ordained deacon, and the next Sunday, presbyter, by the Bishop of Bangor, in the Chapel Royal at St. James. He hasted from the altar where he received ordination, to assist Mr. Wesley in administering the sacrament at West-street Chapel. In the course of that year he preached in their own language to a company of French prisoners at Tunbridge. The soldiers, deeply affected, requested him to preach to them again. But the Bishop of London interfered and forbade him. The bishop shortly after died of a cancer in his mouth. "A just retribution," thought Mr. Wesley, "for silencing such a prophet." Per-

haps it was ; but who shall interpret the ways, especially the judgments of God ?*

In the course of this year, and after his reputation as a preacher began to be known, he availed himself of an opportunity to call upon the eccentric but useful Mr. Berridge, the Vicar of Everton. Fletcher introduced himself as a raw convert, who had taken the liberty to call upon him for the benefit of his instruction and advice. From his accent and manners, Mr. Berridge perceived that he was a foreigner, and inquired what countryman he was. "A Swiss, from the canton of Berne," was the reply. "From Berne ! then probably you can give me some account of a young countryman of yours, one John Fletcher, who has lately preached a few times for the Messrs. Wesley, and of whose talents, learning, and piety, they both speak in terms of high eulogy. Do you know him ?" "Yes, sir, I know him intimately ; and did those gentlemen know him as well, they would not speak of him in such terms, for which he is more obliged to their partial friendship than to his own

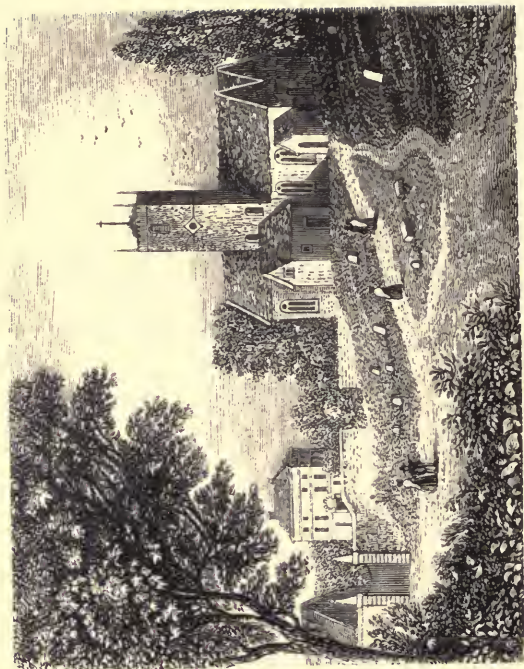
° A propensity to judge in this respect was one of the very few errors of this eminently wise and good man. It was almost the only point on which his enemies fairly fastened him. Take this case. The Bishop of London must needs die like other men. To die by a cancer in the mouth is not worse than to die by twenty other diseases. We knew a holy man who died by a most painful disease under his tongue. How then shall we distinguish the judgment, where the cause is common ? An anecdote of Milton teaches on this subject an important lesson :—The Duke of York (afterward James II.) one day called on the great poet, after he had gone blind. During the interview the duke imprudently asked him if he did not think his blindness a judgment of God, for the part he had taken against his late father, Charles I. Milton replied, "If your highness thinks that the calamities which overtake us in this world are all judgments of God for our sins, what shall I think of your royal father ? *I have lost my eyes, but he lost his head !*"

merits." "You surprise me," said Mr. Berridge, "in speaking so coldly of a countryman in whose praise they are so warm." "I have the best reason," he replied, "for speaking of him as I do—I am John Fletcher!" "If you be John Fletcher," said Mr. Berridge, "you must do me the favour to take my pulpit to-morrow; and when we are better acquainted, without implicitly receiving your statement, or that of your friends, I shall be able to judge for myself." Thus commenced an intimacy with Mr. Berridge which controversy could not interrupt.*

We pass over a period of three years, during which Mr. Fletcher still remained as tutor in the family of Mr. Hill. One of his pupils died as soon as he became of age, and the other became a member of Parliament for Shropshire, and finally took his seat in the House of Peers. Mr. Hill, as a mark of his high esteem for Mr. Fletcher, and an additional compensation for the valuable service rendered to his two sons, presented him the living of Madeley. This was in 1760. We find the curious account of this presentation in the work just quoted:—

"One day Mr. Hill informed him that the living at Dunham, in Cheshire, then vacant, was at his service. 'The parish,' said he, 'is small, the duty light, the income good, (£400 per annum;) and it is situated in a fine, healthy, sporting country.' He thanked Mr. Hill most cordially for his kindness, but added, 'Alas! sir, Dunham will not suit me; there is too much money, and too little labour.' 'Few clergymen make such objections,' said Mr. Hill; 'it is a pity to decline such a living, as I do not know that I can find you another. What shall we do? Would you like Madeley?' 'That, sir,' said Mr. Fletcher, 'would

* Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon.



MADELEY CHURCH.

be the very place for me.' 'My object, Mr. Fletcher, is to make you comfortable in your own way. If you prefer Madeley, I shall find no difficulty in persuading Chambers, the present vicar, to exchange it for Dunham, which is worth more than twice as much.' In this way he became Vicar of Madeley."

Mr. Wesley never approved of the position that Fletcher chose for himself. He regarded it as the great mistake of his life—as nothing less than lighting a candle and putting it under a bushel. When, on the day of his ordination, he came to Mr. Wesley's assistance, the latter wrote in his journal: "How wonderful are the ways of God! When my bodily strength failed, and none in England were able or willing to assist me, He sent me help from the mountains of Switzerland, and a help-mate for me in every respect. Where could I have found such another?" Mr. Wesley, therefore, felt deeply disappointed when Fletcher buried himself in an obscure town on the borders of Wales.

Madeley, in the County of Salop, and the surrounding places, were inhabited by a population of miners and manufacturers, the great majority of whom were almost as ignorant as savages, and nearly as vicious in manners and morals. It was here that Fletcher, with but short intervals, spent the remaining twenty-five years of his life. At first his congregation was small, and at times he almost despaired of success. In a letter to Charles Wesley, dated March 10, 1761, he says:—

"A few days ago I was violently tempted to quit Madeley. The spirit of Jonah had so seized upon my heart, that I had the insolence to murmur against the Lord; but the storm is now happily calmed, at least, for a season. Alas, what stubbornness there is in the will of man; and with what

strength does it combat the will of God under the *mask of piety*, when it can no longer do so with the uncovered shameless face of vice! . . . The Lord, however, does not leave me altogether, and I have often a secret hope that he will one day touch my heart and lips with a live coal from his altar, and that then his word shall consume the stubble and break to pieces the stone."

His zeal rose with the necessities of the evil day. He was instant in season and out of season. Day and night, and every day and night, he was engaged in labours more abundant. When the heavy duties of the Sabbath were done, the no less severe duties of the week began. Besides preaching in different places in the neighbourhood of his parish, and returning frequently at two in the morning over miry roads, he regularly went from house to house, reproofing, rebuking, instructing, and comforting, with apostolic authority, and equal apostolic meekness. The wants of the sick and the penitent he never neglected for a moment. At any hour of the most inclement night, when he heard the sound of the knocker on his door, he would instantly rise, and go forth to minister at the couch of pain, or follow to the gates of death, with his most fervent prayers, the souls of his dying parishioners. Whatever wrongs or wicked behaviour he saw among his people, he was sure to visit with becoming severity. While he pitied the weakness of human nature, he would not tolerate its licentiousness. He would sometimes break in upon a dancing party at midnight, and scatter them as no constable in the parish could do. He justly regarded this pastime, with its usual associations, as a disgrace to the Christian name; and in this opinion he is supported by the unanimous sentiment of all, in every age or country, who have

feared or loved God. To secure a better attendance at church, he waited on those who neglected it, and earnestly entreated them to come. Some of these excused themselves by saying they could not awake in time to get ready. Fletcher's zeal was not to be defeated by such an idle plea. He procured a hand-bell, and, starting at five o'clock in the morning, rang it through the town and awoke the whole parish. Such efforts could not entirely fail. Within a year he wrote again to Charles Wesley:—

“When I first came to Madeley, I was greatly mortified and discouraged by the smallness of my congregations; and I thought that if some of our friends at London had seen my little company, they would have triumphed in their own wisdom; but now, thank God, things are altered in that respect, and last Sunday I had the pleasure of seeing some in the churchyard who could not get into the church.”

By the following October, however, these blossoms and buds of promise were scattered, leaving but little fruit to compensate the toil of the labourer. On the 12th of that month he wrote again to Charles Wesley:—

“My church begins not to be so well filled as it has been, and I account for it by the following reasons: the curiosity of some of my hearers is satisfied, and others are offended by the word; the roads are worse, and if it should ever please the Lord to pour his Spirit upon us, the time is not yet come; for instead of saying, *Let us go up to the house of the Lord*, they exclaim, *Why should we go and hear a Methodist?* I should lose all patience with my flock if I had not more reason to be satisfied with them than with myself. My own barrenness furnishes me with excuses for theirs, and I wait the time when God shall give

seed to the sower, and increase to the seed sown. In waiting that time I learn the meaning of this prayer, '*Thy will be done.*'"

The results of his unwearied labours among his people were various. A faithful minister never leaves his congregation as he finds them. Under his ministry they grow either better or worse; or, in apostolic language, he is to his people "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." It does not appear that the success of Mr. Fletcher's ministry was in any fair proportion to the extent of his labour or the intensity of his zeal. We speak of the number of actual conversions. In this respect Berridge, of Everton, whom Southey sarcastically calls "both a fanatic and buffoon," was more successful. But if Fletcher's ministry was not followed by a series of great revivals, its effect was visible in the general and permanent impression it made on the morals of his parish. Some, indeed, waxed worse and worse; but many, in the words of his epitaph, became his joy and crown of rejoicing. If Madeley was not converted, it was much reformed under the influence of his pure example and ministerial labour. It must not, however, be thought that Satan quietly yielded. Great and good as Fletcher was, the spirit of opposition rose against him, and, like Apollyon in the allegory, fiercely bestrode the way.

The contest between religion and sin is as real as the shock of contending armies. The war-figure of the Scriptures stands on a basis of fact. The world hates righteousness, and when its cherished evils are seriously assailed, like the apparently harmless toad touched by the angel's spear, it reveals at once the demon in his full proportions. Does any minister doubt this? Let him make the experiment on the next respectable robber that he meets. Let

him, like the Baptist, reprove, with becoming earnestness, the next Herod or Herodias that "hears gladly" the less pointed and personal words of his ministry. Let him place himself in bold opposition to the money-making vices of trade, and especially that "*dreadful trade*" which sends men reeling to the bar of God, and he will soon have the proof in no ambiguous terms.

But few men have had fuller experience of this truth than the excellent Vicar of dissolute Madeley. At one time his life was endangered by a mob of drunken colliers, who had assembled for a bull-bait near the Rock Church, in Madeley-Wood. They agreed among themselves to "*bait the parson.*" Some of them were appointed to pull him from his horse, and others to set the dogs on him. As he was about to start for the place, he was unexpectedly called to the funeral of a child, which delayed his coming beyond the usual time. In the meanwhile the bull broke loose and threw down the booth where they were assembled, and put an end to the meeting and sport of the day. Mr. Fletcher went to the appointment, and knew nothing of the treatment intended for him until afterward told of it by his friends. Thus, by a special providence, this servant of God was saved from the fury of men and beasts.

But this was not the only class of men who set themselves in opposition to his ministry. When his church became crowded, some of the church-wardens undertook to hinder strangers of other parishes from coming to the sacrament, or even entering the church. The *gentlemen* of the town, and magistrates, whose revenues were derived in part from the public licentiousness, were as heartily incensed by his zeal as the vulgar herd. One magistrate threatened him with imprisonment, brandished his cane

over him, and called him a Jesuit. The following extract of a letter to Charles Wesley will explain their rage:—

“You have always the goodness to encourage me, and your encouragements are not unseasonable; for discouragements follow one after another with very little intermission. Those of an inward nature are sufficiently known to you; but some others are peculiar to myself, especially those I have had for eight days past during Madeley-wake. Seeing that I could not suppress these bacchanals, I did all in my power to moderate their madness; but my endeavours have had little or no effect; the impotent dyke I opposed only made the torrent foam and swell without stopping its course. You cannot well imagine how much the animosity of my parishioners is heightened, and with what boldness it discovers itself against me, *because I preach against drunkenness, shows, and bull-baiting. The publicans and maltmen will not forgive me. They think that to preach against drunkenness and to cut their purse is the same thing.*”

Some of the neighbouring clergy, to whom Fletcher's purity and zeal were a constant reproof, gave countenance to the mob by persecuting in another way. In August, 1762, he wrote to Charles Wesley:—

“The opposition to my ministry increases. A young clergyman, who lives in Madeley-Wood, where he has great influence, has openly declared war against me by pasting on the church-door a paper, in which he charges me with rebellion, schism, and disturbing the public peace. He puts himself at the head of the gentlemen of the parish, (as they term themselves,) and, supported by the Recorder of Wenlock, he is determined to put in force the Conventicle Act against me. A few weeks ago the widow, who

lives in the Rock Church, and a young man who read and prayed in my absence, were taken up. I attended them before the justice, and the young clergyman with his troop were present. They called me Jesuit, &c., and the justice tried to frighten me by saying 'that he would put the act in force though we should assemble only in my own house.' I pleaded my cause as well as I could; but, seeing he was determined to hear no reason, I told him he must do as he pleased, and that if the act concerned us we were ready to suffer its rigours. In his rage he went the next day to Wenlock, and proposed to grant a warrant to have me apprehended; but, as the other justices were of opinion that the business did not come under their cognizance, but belonged to the Spiritual Court, he was obliged to swallow his spittle alone. The church-wardens talk of putting me in the Spiritual Court for meeting in houses, &c. But what is worst of all, three false-witnesses offer to prove upon oath that I am a liar; and some of *my followers* (as they are called) have dishonoured their profession, to the great joy of our adversaries."

This was a part, but a very small part, of the persecution that tried this faithful minister through a series of years. But he never for a moment gave place to the spirit that, even among the twelve, would have called fire from heaven on the Samaritan village. Sometimes, indeed, his reproofs rose to the terror of prophetic warnings, and in more than one instance they were remarkably fulfilled. An example of this is recorded in a letter to a friend:—

"This evening I have buried one of the warmest opposers of my ministry, a stout, strong young man, aged twenty-four years. About three months ago he came to the church-yard with a corpse, but refused to comè into the

church. When the burial was over I went to him, and mildly expostulated with him. His constant answer was, 'that he had bound himself never to come to church while I was there, adding that he would take the consequences.' Seeing I got nothing I left him, saying, with uncommon warmth, though, as far as I can remember, without the least touch of resentment, 'I am clear of your blood; henceforth it is upon your own head; you will not come to church upon your legs, prepare to come upon your neighbours' shoulders.' He wasted from that time, and, to my great surprise, has been buried on the spot where we were when the conversation passed between us. When I visited him in his sickness, he seemed tame as a wolf in a trap. O, may God have turned him into a sheep in his last hours!"

Although Mr. Fletcher's labours were generally limited to Madeley and the surrounding neighbourhood, yet he occasionally visited other counties, and gave the benefit of his refreshing ministry to other congregations. Such was his unaffected humility that he would gladly exchange pulpits with men every way his inferiors in talents, learning, and piety, always sure that his own flock were gainers by the exchange. Wherever he went he was followed by the eager crowd, sometimes to the chagrin of the parish clerk. On one occasion, at Breedon, in Leicestershire, that worthy functionary was so annoyed by the increase of the congregation, that he determined to compensate himself for his extra labour by demanding a penny from every stranger who came to the church from a distant parish. He placed himself at the door and began to collect the money. Mr. Fletcher heard of what was going on and hastened to church. When the clerk saw him approach-

ing, he left the door and took to the desk. At the close of the service, Mr. Fletcher said, "I have not felt my spirit so moved these sixteen years past as I have to-day. I have heard that the clerk of this parish has demanded, and actually received money from divers strangers before he would suffer them to enter the church. I desire that all who have paid money this way for hearing the gospel will come to me, and I will return what they have paid. And as to this iniquitous clerk, his money perish with him."

At home Mr. Fletcher, with a truly catholic spirit, rejoiced to welcome the labours of good men, whether they were of the Calvinistic or Arminian creed, and whether episcopally ordained or not. "The coming of Mr. Wesley's preachers," said he, "gives me no uneasiness. As I am sensible that everybody does better and, of course, is more acceptable than myself, I should be sorry to deprive any one of a blessing, and I rejoice that the work of God goes on by any instrument or in any place." In a letter to Whitefield, he said: "Last Sunday Captain Scott* preached to my congregation a sermon which was more blessed, though preached only on my horse-block, than a hundred of those I preach in the pulpit. I invited him to come and treat her ladyship next Sunday with another, now the place is consecrated. If you should ever favour Shropshire with

* Son of Richard Scott, Esq., in the County of Salop. He was converted to God under the ministry of the excellent Romaine, one of Lady Huntingdon's chaplains, and became a very popular and successful preacher. He bore about the same relation to the Calvinistic Methodists that Captain Webb did to Mr. Wesley's societies, and drew special attention by the novelty of preaching in his regimentals. In a letter to the countess, Mr. Fletcher says: "I believe this *red* coat will shame many a *black* one. I am sure he shames me."—*Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon.*

your presence, you shall have the captain's or the parson's pulpit, at your option."

In the year 1770, in company with his special friend, Mr. Ireland, he visited France, Italy, and Switzerland. Some of the incidents of this journey are peculiarly interesting, as illustrations of Mr. Fletcher's character. When he approached the Appian Way, the ancient road over which St. Paul was conducted to Rome under the charge of a centurion, he ordered the driver to stop, saying to Mr. Ireland, "that his heart would not suffer him to ride over that ground upon which the apostle had formerly walked, chained to a soldier, on account of preaching the gospel." As soon as he set his foot on the old Roman road, he took off his hat and walked on for some time, with his eyes lifted up to heaven in adoring gratitude for those truths for which Paul suffered and died. He then entertained his fellow-traveller with an animated discourse on a subject which no man has treated more ably—the character, experience, and labours of St. Paul. At Rome he several times put his life in jeopardy by the freeness with which he conversed with every class of men, and especially the priests, on the corruptions of the Church, both in doctrine and practice. He wished Mr. Ireland to accompany him to the Pope's Chapel, which the latter would not consent to do until he promised him that he would not open his lips to reprove the anti-Christian service. Returning through France to Switzerland, Mr. Fletcher visited the Protestants in the Sevens Mountains. Though the journey was long and difficult, yet he attempted it on foot. "Shall I," said he, in opposition to the remonstrance of his friend, "make a visit on horseback, and at ease, to those poor cottagers, whose fathers were hunted along yonder rocks like par-



THE HOUSE IN WHICH FLETCHER WAS BORN

tridges on the mountains? No; in order to secure a more friendly reception among them, I will visit them under the plainest appearance, with my staff in my hand." He went as an apostle through their churches, and conversed with their elders, instructed their youth, visited their sick, and exhorted from house to house in such a manner as strengthened the faith and comforted the hearts of the simple people. At Nyon, in Switzerland, the place of his birth, he preached with such effect as the people had never witnessed before. They would gladly have detained him. An aged clergyman, after trying to persuade him to remain among them, said to Mr. Ireland: "O, sir, how unfortunate for this country; during my day it has produced but one angel of a man, and it is our lot to be deprived of him." When Mr. Fletcher left the town, a large concourse of weeping people crowded around his carriage and followed him two miles on his journey. He returned to Madeley after an absence of about three months.

In 1768 the Countess of Huntingdon founded a theological institution at Trevecca, in the County of Brecknock, in Wales. Her design was to give to pious young men an education for the ministry, under the care of tutors eminent both for learning and holiness. The students were admitted for three years without charge either for board, tuition, or clothing. She applied to Mr. Fletcher to take the presidency of the college. He accepted it as a call of Providence, but would neither resign his charge at Madeley nor reside at Trevecca; and for his services he would accept no compensation whatever. As the superintendent of this school of the prophets, the burden of his labour was to promote the spirit of piety among the students, deeming it far the most important qualification of a messenger of Christ.

Accordingly, the time he spent among them was devoted mainly to preaching, religious conversation, and prayer. These ministrations were seldom without visible effect. At the close of a sermon or free conversation on experimental religion, he would say, "As many of you as are athirst for the fulness of the Spirit follow me to my room." Many would gladly follow him, and remain for hours in earnest prayer before God. It was on one of these occasions that, overwhelmed by the divine blessing, he thought he should die, and, in the intense rapture of the moment, he cried out, "*O, my God, withhold thy hand or the vessel will break!*"

Mr. Fletcher's connexion with the college was broken off in the following manner:—The minutes of the Wesleyan Conference for 1771 contained some propositions which startled the Calvinistic clergy in connexion with Lady Huntingdon. Her brother, the Rev. Walter Shirley, a weak man, wrote a circular letter to men of his own views, requesting them to go in a body to the next meeting of the Conference, and insist on a formal recantation of the obnoxious doctrines. In the meantime the countess caused a strict inquiry to be made concerning the opinions of both the masters and students, declaring that whoever did not disavow the heretical propositions of the minutes should quit the college. "I burn against them," said she. Mr. Joseph Benson was discharged, and Mr. Fletcher soon after resigned. But the matter did not end here. Mr. Fletcher took up his pen in defence of the assailed minutes, and a controversy ensued which has become as famous in the history of Calvinism in England, as the Synod of Dort was in Germany. Of his opponents we shall say nothing more than repeat the language of Robert Hall, (himself a Cal-

vinist,) that "he would not incur the guilt of defaming the character of Mr. Wesley as they did for whole worlds." Mr. Fletcher's spirit in the controversy was as gentle as ever. Not a solitary word can be found in all he wrote betraying the least tang of bitterness, while the spirit of piety thoroughly penetrated every page of the immortal "Checks." Ironical he was, to a degree that might sometimes disturb the leaden countenance of gravity itself. His reasoning was both profound and acute. He touched the flaw of a sophism, and it instantly fell to pieces. He would logically point out the inconclusiveness of an argument, and leave it ridiculously exposed in the clear light of an apt illustration. The great saving doctrines of Christianity are nowhere better explained, guarded, and defended. Sometimes his ardent soul would rise above the dry work of debate, and break forth in a song of rejoicing. When one of his opponents charged him with undervaluing the grace and merits of Christ, he first refuted the accusation by showing the consistency of "*working for life*" with the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, and then exclaimed, "O, ye precious merits of my Saviour, and thou free grace of my God, I, for one, shall want you as long as the sun or moon endureth! Yea, when those luminaries shall cease to shine I shall wrap myself within you! My transported soul shall grasp you! My insatiate spirit shall plunge into your unfathomable depths! And while I run the never-ending circle of my blessed existence, my overflowing bliss shall spring from you, and I shall strike my golden harp to your eternal honour!" Fletcher's "*Checks*" may be read either as a clear and comprehensive defence of Christian doctrine, or as a book of devotion. The history of controversy has nothing like them.

During the period of this dispute, and for some time before it began, Mr. Fletcher's health was seriously impaired. His frequent journeys, in all seasons, from Madeley to the college, injured his constitution. But, though his vigour was diminished, he still went on with his work. He would study and write fifteen hours a day, living meanwhile on the scantiest fare. The consequences were manifest symptoms of consumption, attended with spitting of blood. At Mr. Wesley's instance, and in his company, Mr. Fletcher travelled through various parts of England, a distance in all of nearly twelve hundred miles. For a while his health seemed to improve; but after reaching London the symptoms grew worse, and his physicians pronounced him far gone in a pulmonary consumption. He retired from London to Stoke-Newington, where he was kindly nursed by his friends, Charles and Mary Greenwood. Among others who visited him during his stay in this family, were several of his opponents in the late controversy. The meeting was honourable to both parties. Rudely as they had treated him, he now received them in a most respectful and affectionate manner. "God only knows," said he, in one of his controversial pieces, "how much I love my dear honoured opponents." He now gave them the evidence that controversy, even theological controversy, could not sour his amiable spirit. Mr. Fletcher remained at Newington for nearly four months. The kindness he received affected his heart with such gratitude as indited the following passage of a most touching letter:—

"You have received a poor Lazarus, though his sores were not visible. You have had compassion like the good Samaritan. You have admitted me to the enjoyment of your best things; and he that did not deserve to have the

dogs to lick his sores, has always found the members of Jesus ready to prevent, to remove, or to bear his burdens. And now what shall I say? What but, *Thanks be to God for the unspeakable gift!* And thanks to my dear friends for all their favours! They will, I trust, be found faithfully recorded in my breast, when the great Rewarder shall render to every man according to his works. Then shall a raised Lazarus appear in the gate, to testify of the love of Charles and Mary Greenwood, and of their godly sister."

After he left this hospitable family, he visited various places, and tried various remedies, with but small beneficial effect. At length, as a last resort, he went to the continent, and in company with his fast friend, Mr. Ireland, travelled through France, Italy, and into Switzerland, where he remained over three years among the scenes of his youth. As he was about leaving Dover for France, he wrote again to his two friends at Newington. Nothing can exceed the affectionate and grateful tone of this letter:—

"Ten thousand blessings light upon the heads and hearts of my dear benefactors, Charles and Mary Greenwood! May their quiet retreat at Newington become a Bethel to them! May their offspring be born again there! Their poor pensioner travels on, though slowly, toward the grave. His journey to the sea seems to have hastened rather than retarded his progress to his old mother earth. May every providential blast blow him nearer to the haven of his Saviour's breast, where he hopes one day to meet all his benefactors, and among them those whom he now addresses! O my dear friends, what shall I render? What to Jesus? What to you? May he who invites the heavy-laden, take upon him all the burdens of kindness you have heaped

on your Lazarus! And may angels, when you die, find me in Abraham's bosom, and bring you into *mine*, that by all the kindness which may be shown in heaven, I may try to requite that you have shown to your obliged brother,

“J. F.”

In this second journey to Italy he again visited the city of Rome, and, like Paul at Athens, his spirit was stirred by the gross idolatry and wickedness abounding on every side. One day, as he and Mr. Ireland rode in a coach, the driver informed them the pope was approaching, and that they would be required to come forth and kneel as he passed. They let the coachman know that, though they were in Rome, they would *not* do as Rome does. The poor fellow was alarmed at their boldness, and quick as possible turned aside into another street, and got out of the way. Mr. Fletcher was anxious to reprove the degrading man-worship of the occasion, and would have done it if he could have spoken Italian. He was near attempting it in Latin, and was prevented only by the consideration that none but the priests, and probably few of them, would understand him. “If you had done it,” said a friend of his afterward, “the multitude would have torn you in pieces.” “I believe,” answered Mr. Fletcher, “that the pope himself would have prevented it; for he was a man of sense and humanity.” But Mr. Fletcher was a man of *most charitable judgment!*

From Italy he went to Nyon, the place of his birth, where his health rapidly improved, so that in a short time he was able to resume his beloved work. But since his last appearance among them, a change had come over the spirit of the people. His ministry now was at once popu-

lar and despised. The multitude still flocked to hear him ; but his word was too quick and powerful for a gay and trifling crowd, accustomed to live after the flesh, without reproof or warning from the pulpit. On one occasion, his sermon was directed against Sabbath-breaking and the theatre. The chief magistrate of the town sent for him, and sharply reproved him for what he took as a personal reflection, saying that he had just before engaged a company of French comedians. He ordered Mr. Fletcher to cease from preaching as long as he remained at Nyon. The order was obeyed so far that he preached no longer in the churches, yet he still exhorted in private houses, and instructed as many children as he could collect under the trees and elsewhere.

During his stay at Nyon, he started one day to see a minister of pious renown in the country. After walking several miles, he saw a great crowd gathered around a door. He went in and found a mother and her babe at the point of death, the child at the moment being in violent convulsions. The room was filled with people. "Come," said Mr. Fletcher, "let us ask the Lord to save them." He kneeled, and prayed with great fervour. The child's convulsions instantly ceased, and in a few moments the mother was "easy, lively, and strong." The people stood amazed at what they saw. Mr. Fletcher quietly retired. The question immediately went round, "Who can he be?" And some said, "Surely it was an angel!" We know the risk of relating this fact. "The age of miracles is past!" will be the cry. But stop. What is every answer to prayer but a species of miracle? Would it have been less miraculous if, in answer to Fletcher's prayer, the woman and her babe had recovered in a month? Do you

believe it right to pray for the recovery of the sick? If so, do you believe that the prayer of faith will save the sick? The only difference between this case and thousands of others is, that John Fletcher prayed, and the answer came sooner than usual.

Mr. Fletcher returned from Switzerland to Madeley in 1781. His health was so fully recovered that he resumed the duties of his parish with a zeal that had grown warmer on the borders of the grave. He was now fifty-two years of age. This year he married Mary Bosanquet, of Yorkshire—a lady of some fortune, sound understanding, and ardent piety. She was exactly ten years younger than he. Imbued with his own spirit, she proved an invaluable assistant to his ministry, and in every respect a helpmate worthy of so great and good a man. But the time of their union was short—but three years and nine months. The severe labour he imposed upon himself exhausted the strength of his renewed constitution, and brought him to the gate of death. In the last year of his life he wrote to Mr. Ireland the following letter, which Southey praised for its beauty, and which every Christian reader will feel to be more than beautiful:—

“Surely the Lord keeps us both* in slippery places, that we may still sit loose to all below. Let us do so more and more, and make the best of those days which the Lord grants us to finish the work he has given us to do. O let us fall in with the gracious designs of his providence, trim our lamps, gird our loins, and prepare to escape to the heavenly shore, as Paul did when he saw the leaky ship ready to go to the bottom, and made himself ready to swim to the land.

* Mrs. Fletcher's health was then declining.

“I keep in my sentry-box till Providence remove me; my situation is quite suited to my little strength; I may do as much, or as little as I please, according to my weakness, and I have an advantage which I can have nowhere else in such a degree. My little field of action is just at my door, so that if I happen to overdo myself, I have but a step from my pulpit to my bed, and from my bed to my grave. If I had a body full of vigour, and a purse full of money, I should like well enough to travel about as Mr. Wesley does; but as Providence does not call me to it, I readily submit. The snail does best in its shell. Were it to aim at galloping like the race-horse, it would be ridiculous indeed. I thank God my wife is quite of my mind with respect to the call we have to a sedentary life. We are two poor invalids, who, between us, make half a labourer. She sweetly helps me to drink the dregs of life, and to carry with ease the daily cross. Neither of us is long for this world; we *see* it, we *feel* it, and by looking at death and his Conqueror, we fight beforehand our last battle, with that last enemy whom our dear Lord has overcome for us.”

He laboured and lingered on until August 14, 1785, when he died. But what a death! and how fitting a close of such a life! The glorious scene was preceded by those peculiar manifestations that often tell good men that the hour of their last triumph is nigh. The approach to the ocean is as distinctly intimated by the refreshing sea-winds, as by the roar of the surf, or the sight of its crested waves. Some weeks before his last sickness, he heard the voice of the “faithful and true Witness” in a manner to which he himself had not been accustomed, saying, *Thou shalt walk with me in white.* From that time he was constantly im-

pressed with the unspeakable nearness of eternity. He undertook no journey without consulting the will of God. One day on his knees the question was, *Shall I go to London?* The answer seemed to be, *Not to London, but to thy grave.* The next Sunday, as the choir sang the anthem, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," &c., the prophetic words sunk into his heart, accompanied with an inexpressibly solemn joy. On the following Thursday he took cold, which was followed by fever. On the following Sunday morning, a clergyman offered to relieve him from the duties of the day. He mildly declined the offer, but went himself for the last time. The scene at church is given in the admirable words of the Rev. Mr. Gilpin:—

"He opened the reading service with apparent strength; but before he had proceeded far in it, his countenance changed, his speech began to falter, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could keep himself from fainting. Every eye was riveted upon him, deep solicitude was painted on every face, and confused murmurs of distress ran through the whole congregation. In the midst of this affecting scene, Mrs. Fletcher was seen pressing through the crowd, and earnestly entreating her dying husband no longer to attempt what appeared utterly impracticable. But he, as though conscious that he was engaged in his last public work, mildly refused to be entreated; and struggling against an almost insupportable languor, constrained himself to continue the service. The windows being opened, he appeared to be a little refreshed, and began to preach with a strength and recollection that surprised all present. In the course of his sermon, the idea of his weakness was almost lost in the freedom and energy with which he de-

livered himself. Mercy was the subject of his discourse; and while he expatiated on this glorious attribute of the Deity, its unsearchable extent, its eternal duration, and its astonishing effects, he appeared to be carried above all the fears and feelings of mortality. There was something in his appearance and manner that gave his word an irresistible influence upon this solemn occasion. An awful concern was awakened through the whole assembly, and every one's heart was uncommonly moved. Upon the hearts of his friends in particular, a most affecting impression was made at this season; and what deepened that impression was the sad presentiment which they read in each other's countenance of their pastor's approaching dissolution.

“After sermon he walked up to the communion table, uttering these words: ‘I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim, before the mercy-seat.’ Here the same distressing scene was renewed with additional solemnity. The people were deeply affected, while they beheld him offering up the last languid remains of a life that had been lavishly spent in their service. Groans and tears were on every side. In going through this last part of his duty, he was exhausted again and again; but his spiritual vigour triumphed over his bodily weakness. After several times sinking on the sacramental table, he still resumed his sacred work, and cheerfully distributed with his dying hand the love-memorials of his dying Lord. In the course of this concluding office, which he performed by means of the most astonishing exertions, he gave out several verses of hymns, and delivered many affectionate exhortations to his people, calling upon them at intervals to celebrate the mercy of God in short songs of adoration and praise. And now, having struggled through a service of near four hours’

continuance, he was supported, with blessings in his mouth, from the altar to his chamber, where he lay for some time in a swoon, and from whence he never walked into the world again."

We cannot relate all the particulars of that closing scene. On Wednesday he said to Mrs. Fletcher, "O Polly, my dear Polly, *God is love*. I feel it every moment. Shout! shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth." He agreed with her that if his speech should fail, two taps of his finger should signify that God is love. One of the domestics came in just at that moment. He cried out, "O Sally, God is love! Shout! both of you. I want to hear you shout his praise." His speech began to fail on Thursday. His wife spoke to him of his severe sufferings. He smiled, and gave the sign. She repeated John Wesley's words:—

"Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free boundless mercy cries."

He whispered, "Boundless! boundless! boundless!" And then added, from the same hymn,

"Mercy's full power I soon shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love."

On Saturday some one said to him, "Do you think the Lord will raise you up?" He had just enough strength to answer, "Raise me up in the resurr—" Sunday came—to him the beginning of an eternal Sabbath. It was known through the village that he was dying. A deep gloom rested on the place. Families sat in silence that day. The poor from a distance, his own loved poor, wanted to see him again. The room-door was thrown open. Mournfully, one by one, they passed before it, and took a last lingering

look at that venerable countenance. When his speech was quite gone, Mrs. Fletcher said to him, "If the prospect of glory sweetly open before thee, lift up thy right hand." He raised it up three times, when it fell back and moved no more. We give the rest in the words of Mr. Gilpin, who was present:—

"All was silence when the last angelic minister suddenly arrived, and performed his important commission with so much stillness and secrecy that it was impossible to determine the exact moment of its completion. Mrs. Fletcher was kneeling by the side of her departing husband; one who had attended him with uncommon assiduity during the last stages of his distemper, sat at his head; while I sorrowfully waited near his feet. Uncertain whether or not he was totally separated from us, we pressed nearer, and hung over his bed in the attitude of listening attention; his lips had ceased to move, and his head was gently sinking upon his bosom—we stretched out our hands, but his warfare was accomplished, and the happy spirit had taken its everlasting flight."

So died the Rev. John Fletcher. We shall not attempt to draw his character. He did that himself when he wrote the "Portrait of St. Paul." Like Eve, gazing in Eden's lake, he saw his own image—admired, loved, and described it, but knew not that it was a picture of himself.* This brief sketch, however, would be incomplete without the well-chosen words of one who never flattered the living, nor unduly praised the dead. At the Conference held shortly after Mr. Fletcher's decease, the usual question was asked, "*Who have died this year?*" The laconic answer was given in Mr. Wesley's words:—"John Fletcher,—a

° Paradise Lost, Book IV.

man of all holiness, scarce to be paralleled in a century." After this, Mr. Wesley wrote again:—"I was intimately acquainted with him for thirty years. I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundreds of miles; and in all that time I never heard him speak an improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. Within fourscore years I have known many excellent men, holy in heart and life; but one equal to him I have not known—one so uniformly and deeply devoted to God. So unblameable a man in every respect, I have not found either in Europe or America. Nor do I expect to find another such on this side of eternity."

It is reported as a saying of Richard Baxter's, that his hope of heaven grew brighter at the thought of dwelling forever in the society of John Hampden. We have no censure for the fond affection that expects the renewal of special friendships among the spirits of just men made perfect; and while it is given us to hope for a union with the general assembly, we may anticipate a keener joy in seeing those we most admire, whether they were known to us personally, or only as historic names. Substituting Fletcher for Hampden, we have a thousand times sympathized in the joy of Baxter's hope. For sixty-eight years Fletcher's body has reposed in Madeley churchyard, awaiting the call of the archangel's trumpet. It has long been a cherished wish of our heart, that the day may come, when, as a pilgrim from the western world, we shall see the house in which he lived, the church in which he preached, and, kneeling upon his grave-stone, thankfully adore the Eternal Spirit, who gave such a light to the eighteenth century, and such an example to the remainder of the Christian age.





Wood, sculpsit

Mackenzie, sculp

REV. AMOS A. PHELPS.

Freeborn Garrettson.

ON a beautiful bold bluff, which extends into the Chesapeake Bay, still stands a venerable dwelling, whose quaint little bricks exhibit not only the age in which they were made, but their European origin. The dwelling was erected by Garrett Garrettson, the great grandfather of the REV. FREEBORN GARRETTSON, and the first of the family who emigrated to this country; and well had he chosen the place of his abode. On one side, the Susquehanna poured its noble waters into the broad bay, which, on the other, was seen as far as the eye could reach; while many a point of land projecting into it gave grace and variety to the landscape.

Rutland Garrettson, the only son of Garrett Garrettson, was married to Elizabeth Freeborn, an English lady, who was also an only child, and thus the name borne by so many of their descendants was introduced. They had a numerous family of sons and daughters, who were afterward all settled near this first home of their father. The plantations of five of the brothers lay side by side in a part of Harford County, still known as the Garrettson Forest; and side by side in the old Spesutia church stood their antiquated pews.

John Garrettson, who was one of these brothers, married

Sarah Hanson; she died when the subject of this memoir was quite young, leaving five sons and several daughters. Though Mr. Garrettson never again married, his family remained unbroken, and his children were brought up in those principles of integrity and virtue by which they were afterward characterized. Of the good order that obtained in his father's family, the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson often spoke, remarking, among other things, that he had never heard a profane word spoken in his father's house, either by children or servants.

The means of education were limited in that day, yet Mr. Garrettson endeavoured to supply the deficiency to his children by engaging teachers who resided with him, and taught his own and his brothers' children; and thus from the age of eight until seventeen, Freeborn, his third son, was kept at school—obtained a good English education, began to study Latin and French, but preferring the “exact sciences,” abandoned the study of languages and devoted himself more exclusively to them. “I was,” says he, “so drawn out in these studies, particularly astronomy, that I spent hours alone, both by night and by day, until my school-fellows began to laugh at me.” Grave, sedate, and thoughtful from his early boyhood, beloved by his friends, esteemed by his teachers, with no stain on his moral character, the beautiful youth stood in the opinion of all as a rare example of Christian virtue; and when the Spirit of God showed him his real condition, and in the bitterness of his heart he sought by multiplied observances to find peace and safety, it is not at all surprising that in their darkened state they counted him as mad.

The minister of “old Spesutia,” in whom he had trusted,

could give him no direction; he had already gone a step beyond his guide, and left him for those who, pointing to the cross of Christ, could bid him cast his burden there—for those who could speak of the knowledge of sins forgiven, and urge him to walk in the *light* of God's countenance.

Though only twenty years of age, he was intrusted with the management of his father's plantation, and had, also, frequent land surveys to make; yet he found time to attend all the means of grace in his neighbourhood, and was "instant in prayer and supplication." He was often "ravished by the sweet drawings of heavenly love, and again he sank back into doubt and despondency. As months passed, his worldly anxieties increased. His father's death left him burdened with the care of a family, and executor to the estate. At length, after several years of almost Pharisaic strictness, which, however, could by no means allay the deep thirst of his soul, he made the surrender of his heart to God. He was riding home from church on "Whitsunday-night" when it was made: there was a fearful struggle. "I felt," says he, "Satan on my left, the good Spirit on my right." The one contrasted the world and its allurements, prosperity in business, a good name, honest renown, with that which a proud man likes least to incur—obloquy, shame, distrust, the averted glance of friends, the open taunt of enemies; while the blessed Spirit of grace impressed upon his heart the ponderous realities of eternity, and demanded an instant decision. The crisis had arrived. Dropping the bridle, he clasped his hands and exclaimed, in the fulness of his heart, "Lord, I will part with all, and become an humble follower of thee!"

“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
Into thine arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,—
My Jesus, and my all!”

In that instant his soul was filled with joy and peace, the “peace of God, which passeth understanding.” Nature seemed in that solemn solitary place to unite with him in highest jubilee. “The stars,” said he, “seemed like so many seraphs going forth in their Maker’s praise.” As he approached his home the servants, hearing the sound of his rejoicing, ran out to meet him, and to ask what was the matter. “I called the family together for prayer,” said he, “for the first time, but my prayer was turned to praise.” It was a few days after this, that, as he stood up to give out a hymn at family worship, the moral evil of slavery was impressed on his mind, and with a willing heart he responded, “Lord, the oppressed shall go free;” and, turning to the astonished negroes, he proclaimed their liberty, and promised a just compensation for any services they might render him in future; and “my mind was as clear of them,” said he, “as if I had never owned them.”

And now the expansive principle of Christianity implanted in his heart impelled him to labour for the salvation of others. From house to house, despite of trials and temptations, of buffetings without and fears within, he went, first to the homes of his friends, in one of which he left a dear cousin “under deep awakening,” in another a brother “groaning for redemption in Jesus,” at another brother’s twenty seeking their soul’s salvation. He soon saw all his brothers added to the Lord, Methodist preaching established among them, and a society of thirty formed and placed under the care of the circuit preacher. Of

these first fruits of his labours, two, if not more, were added to the ministry—his brother Richard and his cousin Freeborn Garrettson. Well was it that the Lord set the broad seal of his approbation to the labours of his young servant. Though strong were his temptations and heavy his cross, yet on he went—now to the quarter of the negro, now to the domicil of the master, bearing his message of love. What mattered it that his name was cast out as evil—that insults and sometimes blows awaited him—that the doors of some who had loved him best were closed against him, when his Saviour so filled his soul with joy that oftentimes, like St. Paul, he scarcely knew whether he was “in the body” or “out of the body?” Before the parson and the vestry, as before other companies of men, the Lord filled his mouth with arguments, while the sweetness of his spirit often turned the lion into the lamb. The poor blacks! how they must have hailed the new light that dawned upon them—how blessed the only power that could rescue them from degradation, and make them kings and priests unto God!

It would surpass the limits of this sketch were I to dilate on the severe exercises which preceded his entrance into the ministry. To become a Methodist preacher in *that* day, was to abandon all that the world holds dear—ease, honour, wealth, home, and the social relations which make home so sweet: and all were abandoned when, weak and almost fainting under the severity of the struggle, he rose from his bed, left his house, rode to Baltimore, where the Conference was in session, and gave his name (which he had often been solicited to do) as a member of the Church and Conference. Still the cross was almost insupportable; and when he returned to his lodgings, he fainted

under a deep sense of responsibility, and an humbling view of his own unfitness for so great a work. On recovering he found himself surrounded by his brethren: his soul was filled with a foretaste of heavenly bliss—a baptism for the arduous service on which he had entered.

The field of his labours for the next nine years lay in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. He went forth “weeping, bearing precious seed,” and came again “with rejoicing,” having gathered many sheaves. There was another warfare waging at this time which often threatened interruption to his labours: he could not take the oath of allegiance proffered him in Virginia, first because, though from the beginning his feelings had been enlisted in behalf of his country, his mind was not yet clear as to the lawfulness of resistance; secondly, because the oath was so worded as to bind him “to take up arms whenever called upon,” &c. He “felt no disposition to use carnal weapons.” For the arrest and imprisonment with which he was menaced he was not careful, but left himself and his cause in the hands of One who would make all things work together for good. Under this date, Virginia, 1777, he says: “The more I am despised and persecuted the happier my soul is, the larger my congregations, and the more my labours are blessed.” How often during these years did he realize the promise of our Lord, “Every one that forsaketh houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” How many homes were open to the way-worn wanderer! How many kind friends greeted him as a son and brother! “Even treated more like a son than a stranger, more like an angel than a poor clod of earth,” is an entry in his diary.

Sometimes these beloved friends would have allured him from his appointed work by their kindness. "Abide with us, and we will do thee good," was their language. To him, however, who had laid his all on the altar, these temptations only added other victories to those already won. He says, under date of June, 1777: "The people here wanted to ruin me with their kindness. The temptation was strong. Satan began to lay a hundred schemes to entrap me, in order that my usefulness might be hindered. The thing itself was pleasing to nature, to live at ease, with an abundance of what the world calls good, and the prospect of doing good withal! World, away with thy flattery! I can rejoice in my God with the testimony of a conscience void of offence, knowing that the oblation is made for the sake of Christ's Church, whom he purchased with his own blood, being convinced that I can do more good in wandering up and down the earth without any encumbrance. As for the riches of the world I have enough to serve my turn. It is no time to think of lands, or houses, &c. I passed on, rejoicing in God my Saviour."

Preaching from one to four times daily, often beset by enemies to the cross of Christ who testified their animosity by deed as well as word, besought by friends not to expose himself, how must the heart of the youthful disciple have longed for *rest!* It was just after he had resisted the importunity of his more prudent friends that he met one of those ruffians who sometimes bear a title only to disgrace it. After several threats, finding that he could not intimidate Mr. Garrettson, he commenced a furious assault, in which he commanded his servants to engage, and ended it only when his victim lay senseless on the ground. A woman providentially passed by with a lancet, who had

him removed to the nearest house and bled him. What a scene that cottage presented! The young minister just awaking from his trance, but not able to rise, his face wounded and bleeding, but radiant with a joy that he could scarcely contain, believing himself near the eternal world, and ravished by the view which faith presented, yet pausing to pray for his murderer and to guide him to the way of safety; the poor persecutor, frightened at the effect of his passion, either pacing the room with agitated steps, or sitting beside his victim and reading, by his direction, passage after passage of Holy Writ. Mr. Garrettson, in after life, when speaking of this assault, said: "Brown was a small man, and I was strong and agile; in a contest I *could* have overpowered him." But it was not by conflict or by violence that Christianity won its trophies either in the first or the eighteenth century.

This constant warfare with the powers of darkness gave to the countenance of those dear servants of God a solemnity and elevation of character which sometimes awakened the careless when no word was spoken. "My first conviction, when a boy," said an eminent Presbyterian divine, "was received from observing Mr. Garrettson as he was walking by—there was something so holy, so heavenly, in his expression, that I was strongly impressed with the truth of religion."

Such were the men that kindled a flame through the length and breadth of our country. Had the world seen their like since apostolic days? The Reformers, though bold in the cause of truth, were full of asperity; here courage was tempered by meekness and love.

The life of the itinerant, however, was not wholly marked by toil and trial. Green spots there were in the path of

his pilgrimage—"sweet resting bowers," where the weary might repose beside the still waters—delectable mountains where sweet counsel might be taken and new strength imbibed. Such a spot, among many others, was the house of Henry Airey, Esq. When being conducted to the prison at Cambridge, by a mob, it was this devoted friend who accompanied him; and when the mob was dispersed by a remarkable flash of lightning, and the two friends were left to themselves, how cheerfully the light of that home gleamed in the distance! What sweet communion did its inmates enjoy when, gathered together around its ample hearth, they talked of all that befell them by the way! The next day was to bring its trouble, but that they left to God. When the morrow came, and the prison-life was a reality, it was still to that dear friend he owed his earthly solace; it was to him he owed the comforts which made confinement less irksome. "No weapon that was formed against him prospered." Fire-arms pointed at him dropped harmlessly from the hands that held them. Mobs raged around him, but had no power to injure. Committals were written, but left unexecuted. Even in the exceptions to these escapes God brought abundant good out of the unjust infliction, and many heard the gospel from his prison windows who might not have heard it otherwise.

Just as Mr. Garrettson was preparing to go to Charleston, S. C., Dr. Coke arrived, with full power to organize a Church. Mr. Wesley had "been for many years convinced that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain," but had hitherto refused to exercise it "for peace' sake;" now, however, that America had achieved her independence, and was untrammelled either by Church or State, he deemed it

a duty to assume the right, and accordingly, in conjunction with several other ministers of the English Church, ordained the Rev. Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey elders, and set apart Dr. Coke, already a presbyter, to the office of superintendent of the American work.

“Like an arrow” from the bow, Mr. Garrettson went from North to South to summon the preachers to attend the Christmas Conference, to be held in Baltimore, Dec., 1784. He travelled twelve hundred miles in six weeks, preaching often as he went. At that Conference he was ordained, and from thence he went as a volunteer to Nova Scotia.

For two years this indefatigable minister of the Lord Jesus ceased not to preach the word in that cold inhospitable region; traversing its mountains and valleys, often on foot, with his knapsack on his back, he threaded Indian paths in which it was not expedient to take a horse; sometimes waded through morasses, his hunger satisfied by no dainty morsel, his thirst slaked at some babbling brook, his weary limbs rested on a couch of leaves. But God blessed his labours abundantly: many, many souls were added to the Lord; chapels were built, but were too small to contain the crowds who pressed to hear the word. Hearts and homes were open to receive him, and though sometimes “stones flew,” and a heavy one was “aimed at his head,” they passed close by without injuring him; and he remarks, “This is but trifling, if I can win souls to Jesus.”

At the Conference in Baltimore, May 7th, 1787, Dr. Coke, by the direction of Mr. Wesley, proposed to appoint Mr. Garrettson superintendent of the work throughout the British provinces in America. The question was taken, and he was unanimously elected to that office. On mak-

ing this election known to Mr. Garrettson, he said that he would take one year to visit the field thus tendered, and, if acceptable to the people, he would return to the next Conference and be consecrated for the office. Letters of commendation to the West India Islands, &c., &c., were written; but when his name was read off the next day, it was not as missionary bishop to the British provinces, but as Presiding Elder of the Peninsula, where he had formerly laboured so successfully. And he never inquired into the reason of the change, but went, followed by the deep regrets of his Nova Scotia friends. The storm of persecution and war had ceased—a flood-tide of prosperity and popularity bore him onward. It was a rest of spirit he had fairly earned—a short rest, for the next Conference appointed him presiding elder over a new and unsettled field in New-York. Methodism, previous to this time, (1788,) had travelled no higher up than New-Rochelle. Mr. Garrettson's new district comprised the country lying between New-Rochelle and Lake Champlain, and extended from the Eastern States to Whitestown, near Utica. Before Mr. Garrettson left Conference, such light seemed to illuminate his path that he was enabled to allot to each of the young men whom the Conference had placed at his disposal his appropriate field of labour, and to fix the time and place of their several quarterly meetings. How little did he imagine, as he set out on his journey northward, the important bearing that this station would have upon his future happiness! It was in 1789, while Mr. Garrettson was at Poughkeepsie, that a servant-man inquired for him, bearing his master's compliments, and an invitation to visit Rhinebeck. The invitation was accepted, and Mr. Garrettson went to the house of Thomas Tillotson, Esq., where

he was received with kindness and hospitality. Mr. Tiltson was from Maryland, and had heard much of Mr. Garrettson in his native state. Preaching was established and a class of two formed, of which Miss Catharine Livingston (afterward Mrs. Garrettson) was one. Miss Livingston had experienced religion several years before, had been much edified by Mr. Wesley's Works, and was already a Methodist in doctrine and affection, when Methodist preaching was so unexpectedly supplied. Mr. Garrettson received from these friends introductory letters to other branches of the family, who also received him with great kindness.

Such was his first reception into the family of which he, several years afterward, became a member. He believed that his union with Miss Livingston was divinely appointed; and from that event the social happiness he so nobly relinquished at the commencement of his ministry became his in no common degree.

Mr. Garrettson took this district in 1788, and left it in the spring of 1793. The membership during that time had increased from ten to upwards of two thousand five hundred. In 1793 he was appointed to the Philadelphia District, where he spent the first year of his wedded life. The next year he was returned as Presiding Elder of the Dutchess District, and settled at Rhinebeck, about four miles from the Hudson.

This first dwelling of Mr. and Mrs. Garrettson was a very humble one, well suited to their narrow income. Salary there was none—for Mr. Garrettson would never lessen the stipend his brethren received by accepting his own proportion. His patrimony during those years of deep devotion to a better service had suffered loss, though it had still been sufficient for his moderate wants. Mrs.

Garrettson's income was also, at that time, a very limited one; so that their experience, during the first six years of married life, was more in unison with that of their brethren than has been generally supposed. But their home, though lowly, was a bright and cheerful one. Peace and contentment, hospitality and love made it such; and when, in 1800, its inmates left it for a larger and more convenient abode, on the banks of the Hudson, many tears were shed as a tribute to the hours of sweet enjoyment passed beneath its roof.

Mr. Asbury's impression, on first visiting the new abode of his friend, is recorded in these few pithy words: "He hath a beautiful land and water prospect, and a good, simply elegant, useful house, for God, his people, and the family." Perhaps, to make this description of the good bishop more just, the word elegant should have been obliterated. Certain it is that no article of the furniture or dress of these dear friends, to whom he paid an annual visit, wounded his almost ascetic conscience. When this house was raised, God's blessing was invoked, and an answer of peace given; when finished and consecrated, God's power was most manifestly felt. For twenty-seven years it was the resting-place of Mr. Garrettson; his labours ceased only with his life. He continued, with few intervals, to exercise the office of presiding elder until 1815; after this he travelled at large, visiting the Churches among whom he had formerly laboured, rejoicing everywhere to preach Christ and him crucified. He was deeply interested in the missionary and educational interests of our Church. His anxiety for the establishment of societies for these purposes was ever in advance of his brethren; his pleasure when they were established, and

the zeal with which he asserted their claim to public patronage, partook more of the fervour of youth than the cool sobriety of age. To all charities, indeed, he contributed to the extent of his ability—his moderate income, like his house, was “for God, his people, and the family.” His public obligations never interfered with his private duties; the same love which prompted him to seek sinners in the highways and hedges, shed a hallowing influence over his home. He was a devoted husband, a tender father, an affectionate brother, a beneficent uncle. All claims were properly adjusted. His discipline was so tempered by love that the rule of the house was always felt to be both kind and just. Ever more ready to commend than censure, with a judgment that seldom erred, the right way was made the pleasant way as well as the way to please. Seldom, perhaps, has the master of a household been more loved and honoured. He rarely, if ever, rebuked any one of his family in public. Were there evils to be corrected, a private interview was sought at some suitable time which should most avoid observation; plain, affectionate conversation was concluded by prayer, and the culprit came from that private interview loving his reprover with a more ardent affection, and manifested by his conduct, for months to come, how deeply it had impressed him. The ruffled brow of care was smoothed, discordant tempers harmonized, and a new spirit infused. No one knew, by word or hint from the master of the household, that reproof had been administered; but a quiet smile passed around as the settled demeanour and the cheerful alacrity of the delinquent was noted. Such was the paternal influence that he exercised in that sweet, tranquil abode up to the last hour of his stay in it.

On Friday, the 17th of August, 1827, he left home in his usual health, expecting to spend the Sabbath in New-York, and to return the following Monday or Tuesday. On Sunday morning he preached his last sermon, in Duane-street Church, and administered the sacrament; on Sunday evening he went to the same church, though he did not preach. After a fatiguing day, on Monday he came to the house of his friend, George Suckley, Esq. He appeared to the family to be in unusual health and spirits, and sat up beyond his usual hour, although he intended to take the boat at six o'clock. That night, however, he was seized with his last agonizing disorder, and, after passing several days of intense pain and extreme danger, he abandoned the thought of returning home, and sent for his wife and daughter to come down to him. The following passages, copied from letters written immediately after his death, will best detail the closing scenes of his life:—

“On our arrival we were told that the crisis of his disease had been favourably passed, and that, though lingering, there was every prospect of his ultimate recovery. But, though we suffered our judgment to be led captive by our wishes even to the last, no hopes of that kind were ever implanted in his mind. His sufferings were, at times, unutterable; but through them all were manifested a resignation and fortitude no agony could destroy. ‘I shall be purified as by fire;’ ‘I shall be made perfect through suffering;’ ‘It is all right, all right; not a pain too much,’ he would often say. As he descended into the dark valley, his views of the grandeur and efficacy of the atonement became more and more enlarged. His disorder inclined him latterly to slumber, and he was often delirious; but even then the same subject was the theme of his dis-

course. Toward the last, his strength was so much exhausted that articulation became a painful effort; but we would often hear him say, 'I want to go home; I want to be with Jesus, I want to be with Jesus.' To a friend, who asked him how he was, he said, 'I feel the perfect love of God in my soul.' A day or two before his departure I heard him say, 'And I shall see Mr. Wesley too.' It seemed as if he were contemplating the enjoyment of that world upon the verge of which he then was—enjoyments which he said a Christian might well understand, as they began in his heart even in this life. His mind was employed with subjects for the sweetest emotions of love and adoration. When asked how he did, he would answer, 'I feel love and good-will to all mankind,' or, 'I see a beauty in all the works of God;' forgetting that the infirmities of his body had been the subject of inquiry. His last sentence was, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Hallelujah! hallelujah!' After that, though he lingered many hours, he could not speak articulately. Once only, clasping his hands and raising his eyes to heaven, he uttered, 'Glory! glory!'

"When the hour arrived in which his spirit was to achieve its last great victory, we all kneeled around the bed, and Mr. Levings, in a manner and in language of which I can never give you an idea, commended his spirit to its Father and its God. You would have imagined that he really saw the chariot and the horsemen which were sent to convey the father and the patriarch to his reward; and as fervently did he implore that the mantle might fall—as triumphantly did he resign him. And as he prayed, my dear mother, stretching forth her hands as if she felt the immediate presence of God, exclaimed, 'Yes, Lord, we do

resign him! freely resign him! We give him up to thee! He is thine; receive his spirit!' Mr. Levings ceased praying: there was a pause, and in that pause the spirit departed. And, as if our united prayer was answered, and the mantle *did* descend, such a divine influence pervaded the apartment that two of the preachers almost sunk to the floor, under a glorious sense of His presence who filleth immensity. The spirit departed, leaving the body impressed with the sweetest expression of peace and tranquillity—an expression which it retained until the moment when it was shrouded from human observation. We could stand beside those dear remains, and imagine that their appearance of renewed youth and happiness was a pledge of that glorious resurrection, when 'death shall be swallowed up in victory,' and the 'mortal put on immortality.'

"Thus, as a ripe shock of corn, he was gathered into the garner of his God, in the seventy-sixth year of his age and the fifty-second of his itinerant ministry. He ended his useful life at the house of his long-tried friend, George Suckley, Esq., in the city of New-York, about two o'clock in the morning of the 26th of September, 1827."*

His remains were conveyed to his own residence, accompanied by his family and many sympathizing friends; and soon after, followed by a large concourse of people, they were deposited in the rear of that church where he had so often explained the word of life.

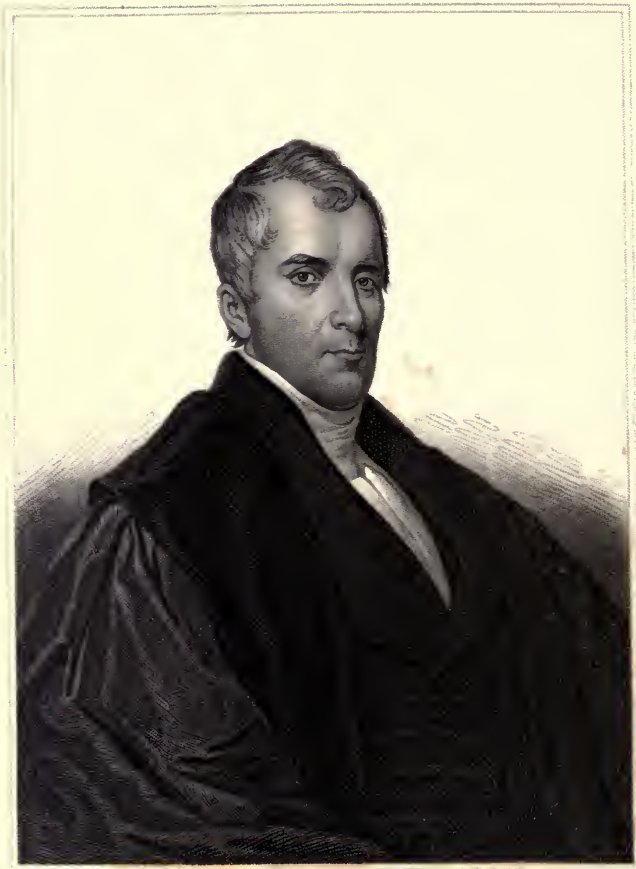
In so brief a memoir, it would have been impossible to give more than an outline of the character and labours of this useful and laborious servant of the Lord. In treating of the former, I have endeavoured to place in bold relief

* Dr. Bangs.

those features which have hitherto escaped notice. His singleness of view, his brotherly kindness, his perfect guilelessness, his activity, his zeal, and his piety, have all been dwelt upon by others. I wished to dilate upon his social character—to show him as a husband, a father, and a patriot; but the limits assigned me are passed.

His labours speak for themselves. He was one of the most efficient agents in building up a Church to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land. When he joined it, there were but nineteen travelling ministers, and three thousand one hundred and twenty-eight members; when he died, the ministry numbered one thousand five hundred and seventy-six, and the membership three hundred and eighty-one thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven. He rests from his labours, and his works do follow him.





Engraved by E. Maclean

IRIE W. WILBUR FISK, D.D.

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY MIDDLETOWN CT.

Willbur Fisk.*

WILLBUR FISK was born at Brattleboro', in the State of Vermont, on the thirty-first day of August, 1792. His ancestors were of the old Puritan stock, and maintained the virtues and piety of that peculiar people. His father, Isaiah Fisk, was stripped of his patrimony by unfortunate business connexions, and compelled to seek a residence in the wilder and less cultivated portions of the state. He accordingly removed to Lyndon, within about forty miles of the Canada line, where he resided respected and beloved by all who knew him. He filled important legislative and judicial offices, and discharged the duties they imposed with severe virtue and untarnished honour. The region of country in which he resided after the birth of his son Willbur, is described as being peculiarly adapted to excite emotions of beauty and sublimity. "The house is situated on a considerable eminence, overlooking a wide extent of country. Around it the tops of the hills are seen peering one above another, like the caps of the ocean billows in a gale; while, at the distance of forty miles, are discerned the summits of the White Mountains of New-

° This memoir has been chiefly compiled from Dr. Holdich's *Life of Willbur Fisk*, and extracts not otherwise noted are to be accredited to that work.

Hampshire, soaring majestically till their heads are lost in the clouds."

Born of such ancestry, and reared amid scenes like these, Willbur Fisk in early life was impressed with a reverence for God, and an appreciation of the beauty and sublimity of his works. "He would wander off by himself for hours, traversing the woods, climbing the hills, or tracing the windings of the rivulet. There is one spot on the farm which was a favourite resort. It is the summit of a sloping hill, perhaps two hundred feet high, terminating on one side precipitously, and crested with a lovely grove." Here he often wandered with his book, deriving instruction from its pages and inspiration from the surrounding scene.

His mother, whose maiden name was Willbur, was diligent in impressing the great principles of Christianity upon the minds of her children. "She took them early and constantly to church, made it a particular business to read to them the word of God, required them to learn their Catechism, and commit texts, hymns, and prayers to memory. She had the happy art, too, of rendering these things more a pleasure than a burden. According to their capacity, she was almost constantly stimulating them to thought and inquiry by her conversation with them. Both parents were exemplary in the observance of the Sabbath. They regarded it as a day strictly set apart for religious uses, and hence the time not spent in public worship was occupied in family instruction. Yet their piety was so mild and cheerful, and their household governed with such uniform consistency, that the Sabbath was far from being a dull or gloomy day." Such training necessarily produced a happy effect upon the family circle.

Young Willbur was naturally of strong temper, passionate and self-willed; but the influence of his religious training was felt at a very early age. He says of himself, referring to a period when he was not more than five years of age, "Often I have watered my pillow with my tears for the sins I had committed, and frequently have I feared to sleep lest I should awake in misery." It is not remarkable, therefore, that when, in his eleventh year, the family was bereaved by the loss of an infant, he should be deeply impressed by the solemn event. "Standing by the side of the corpse, he said to his sister Mary, 'How good God is to us! He has taken our little brother away who needed no conversion; but he has given us time to repent.'" We are told that his convictions of sin now became deep, his faith in Christ clear, and the change in his feelings deep and obvious. He was soon after admitted on probation in the Methodist Church, and gave indications of future usefulness. None of those who heard his first attempts at public prayer, and in the relation of his experience in class-meeting and love-feast, were unprepared for his future eminence and success.

His mental discipline and culture were, however, at this time, in not so favourable a condition. His mind had been awakened to the importance of education, and he manifested great eagerness in the acquisition of knowledge, frequently rising at three or four o'clock in the morning to pursue his studies before the family were up. He carried a book in his pocket to beguile the leisure moments, and the selections he made would seem to have been judicious; for, when it was proposed to introduce Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History* into the course of studies at Middletown, he remarked, "I first

read that book while attending a lime-kiln on my father's farm."

But his advantages were limited to such books as were within his reach; for, from the time he was seven years of age until he was sixteen, he attended school not more than two or three years. Speaking of this, he says of himself, "Thus the best part of my time for literary instruction was lost; a loss I shall always regret, as it can never be made up. I always consider three years of my life as little better than thrown away. It is true, during these years I read a great number of authors, which served to enlarge my ideas of men and things; but as I had none to direct my studies, and as, from the scarcity of good books, I had but little opportunity of exercising even my own judgment in a choice, my reading was very desultory, and, in many instances, very unprofitable."

In 1809 he went to a grammar-school at Peacham, about twenty miles from Lyndon. He seems to have impressed his associates and friends by the dignity of his demeanour and his zeal in study. But while here he relaxed the strictness of his devotional exercises, lost the fervour of his religious zeal, and became, we are told, as worldly and ambitious as his associates.

In 1812 he entered the Sophomore class in the University of Vermont. Soon after, the war with England occasioned an interruption in the duties of the institution,—the college buildings were occupied by troops,—and we find Fisk in 1814 a student of Brown University, at Providence, Rhode Island. His college companions soon recognised his abilities as a student. The faculty which he always displayed of thinking closely and expressing himself clearly in extemporaneous debate made him a

popular champion among them, and led even his instructors to anticipate the brilliant successes he afterward so triumphantly achieved. He graduated with honour in 1815.

We now approach a period in his history that is full of interest. His parents had always indulged the hope that he would devote himself to the work of the ministry. Their deep piety and lofty views of the dignity, importance, and usefulness of the Christian ministry, naturally led them to desire that a son of theirs should fill the sacred desk, while the devotion and success of their Willbur in early life gave them ground to hope that God would call him to the sacred work. He himself had indulged similar views; but now that the time of action had arrived, he found himself without the deep-toned piety he felt to be requisite. His studies while in college, as well as his predilection, were turned toward political life, a field in which one of his associates at Peacham, the Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, has since gained distinction. He had, however, much disquietude of mind, and the thought of decision was painful. Receiving a favourable offer from the Hon. Isaac Fletcher, he entered his office in Lyndon, and commenced the study of law. This he pursued with the indefatigable perseverance which always characterized him, but he had many misgivings as to his true destiny. His father still cherished the hope that his religious emotions would be kindled anew, and that he "would feel that woe that St. Paul speaks of if he preached not the gospel." And his mother said, that "while Willbur was aiming at becoming a distinguished statesman, I was all the time praying that he might be made a minister."

Meanwhile his collegiate course had involved both his father and himself in expense, which made it necessary for him to seek profitable employment, and, on the recommendation of the President of Brown University, he became a private tutor in the family of Col. Ridgely, at Oaklands, near Baltimore, Md. Here most of his time was spent in solitude, and in the colonel's well-stored library, the anxiety of his mind increasing rather than diminishing, and his health gradually, but perceptibly failing. From his youth he had been subject to a dry cough, and now violent symptoms of pulmonary disease manifested themselves, resulting in copious hemorrhage from the lungs. By the advice of his physician he returned home, having to delay on the way thither to gather strength for the different portions of the journey. On reaching home, he found the Church enjoying a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the midst of this work his early enjoyments and blessings were fearfully contrasted with his present condition, and the associations of former years returned with renewed force. He was deeply affected, and his distress so impressed one of the ministers in attendance that years afterward he said: "I shall never forget it, for the impression is as vivid in my mind as it was when I saw the tears flowing down his emaciated cheeks." In this state of mind he continued several days, until he laid hold by faith upon One "mighty to save and strong to deliver."

And now the idea of the ministry returned with renewed force upon his mind, and "the love of Christ constrained him." He was opposed by his old friends, who had looked forward to his eminence at the bar or in political life as certain; but, though taunted and ridiculed, he found the

call of God stronger than the appeals of men, and fully committed himself to the work. He did not enter upon it rashly, or without consideration; before his reclamation it had been the subject of thought and prayer; and when he found himself renewed in the strength of God, he had no difficulty in settling the question. In 1838 he addressed the Preachers' Aid Society of the city of Baltimore, and though the writer of this brief sketch was but thirteen years of age, he well remembers the deep interest that the rehearsal of his experience awakened. It was given as a dialogue between a young man and his Divine Master, in which his objections are stated and answered:—

Christ. Go, preach my gospel.

Answer. But, Lord, I have other engagements.

Christ. You are not your own; you are bought with a price.

Ans. But, Lord, I have been preparing myself for another profession; I have been struggling for an education; I have high prospects before me, &c.

Christ. What have you that you have not received?

Ans. Lord, I have strong domestic feelings, and I hope one day to have a family of my own.

Christ. He that loveth houses or lands, wife or children, more than me, is not worthy of me.

Ans. Lord, I have aged parents, and I am an only son: filial love and duty require that I should look after them.

Christ. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

Ans. Lord, is there no excuse? May not another answer?

Christ. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance.

Ans. At least, let me first stop and bury my father and mother.

Christ. Let the dead bury their dead.

Ans. At any rate, I must wait awhile and acquire some property.

Christ. He that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.

Ans. Lord, I cannot go.

Christ. Woe unto you if you preach not the gospel.

Ans. Lord, wilt thou not pity a poor helpless wretch who begs for an excuse as one would plead for life?

Christ. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.

“Here,” said Dr. Fisk, “the dialogue ended; the young man covered his face with his hands, and bursting into tears, cried, ‘Nay, but I yield! I yield!’ The bond was signed and sealed, and the youth was consigned over, body and soul, to the Church. The next thing I saw of him he was threading a pathless forest among the Green Mountains bordering upon the Canada line, driving his horse before him because of the roughness of the wilderness, cheerful as an angel on an errand of mercy. And I heard his song, with which he made the ragged mountain-tops that hung over his path reverberate; and what, sir, do you think it was?

“‘Nothing on earth I call my own—
A stranger to the world unknown,
I all their goods despise;
I trample on their whole delight,
And seek a city out of sight,
A city in the skies.’”

From this time we find him entirely devoted to the work of the ministry. His first appointment was Craftsbury Circuit. He laboured here two years with zeal and success, and an incident occurred during his residence here that displays the self-possession and coolness for which he was so distinguished. "A lady at whose house he often stayed, was unfortunately subject to temporary fits of insanity. During one of these attacks, she one day rushed to him with a large sharp-pointed butcher's or carving-knife in her hand. Persons who were present saw it and trembled. Stepping hastily up to Mr. Fisk, she tore open his vest and shirt-bosom ere he was aware, and placing the sharp point to his skin, said, "You must die. You talk so much of heaven, I am going to send you there. You are too good to live." Without quailing in the least, he looked her calmly and steadily in the face. She paused for some time, when, removing the instrument, she said, "You are fit to live or die. We want such men on earth, so I will let you live a little longer," and immediately left the apartment.

At the Lynn Conference of 1819, he was appointed to Charlestown, Mass. He went there under much depression; but the blessing of God attended him, and not only made him the instrument of much good to others, but his own personal experience was deepened and enlarged. His religious emotions acquired a degree of intensity and elevation never before enjoyed by him. His whole conversation, correspondence, and pulpit efforts glowed with the rich fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.

The following "resolutions, entered into for the better improvement of time," are given here not only to show the secret of his success and strength, but also in the hope

that they may excite others to do likewise. They bear date June 30th, 1819.

“1. I am resolved, so far as I can effect it, to retire at nine, and rise at five.

“2. I will appropriate one hour to my morning devotions.

“3. I will allow one hour for breakfast, family devotion, and such incidental circumstances as may demand my attention.

“4. I will write each day two hours.

“5. I will spend two hours each day in some regular scientific or literary study, which I shall adopt from time to time.

“6. I will spend one hour in miscellaneous reading.

“7. One hour for my devotions at noon, and one for dinner.

“8. One hour each day in preparing my discourses for the Sabbath.

“9. The remainder of the day to visiting.

“10. Whenever I am constrained from any cause to break in upon my regular course, I will endeavour, as much as possible, to prevent any loss of time by returning to it as soon as may be, and will then attend to such branches that my judgment dictates will be the most improper to neglect; at all times remembering not to curtail my devotions and my preparations for the Sabbath.”

These rules regulated his life while he continued in active ministerial service.

During the second year of his ministry at Charlestown, he sank under the multiplicity and fervour of his labours, and was compelled to desist from active exertion. He generally, if not always, preached without notes, and

warmly recommended this practice. But his sermons were always studied with great care, and many of them give evidence of elaborate preparation. His aim in preaching was evidently to "commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." His style was polished, and his delivery earnest, chaste, and impressive in an unusual degree. He was an original thinker, deep and accurate. We have heard some of his discourses described as too abstruse for the multitude; but these must have been exceptional occasions, his general style being perspicuous, and his subjects adapted to the wants of the people. He addressed himself *to* the audience. "On one occasion, while preaching with great enlargement on the final judgment, a man rose as in a frenzy, stamped upon the floor, and, with a horrible oath, rushed out of the house." A remark he made to a friend with reference to a discourse in which he had felt particular interest, seems to be characteristic of his general manner. He said, "It seemed as if my mouth was filled with arguments suited to the *tone* of feeling *then* excited in the people. There was weeping throughout the house, and a solemn awe seemed to rest upon the people."

The letters written during this period of affliction show, that though disabled for the pulpit, he still had the interest of his flock deeply at heart. It was a period of great religious prosperity in the neighbourhood, and he felt the restraint of his physical weakness deeply; yet his soul was comforted by the reflection, that if he could not move forward with successful warriors, he could pray for their success.

At the New-England Conference of 1822, he was ordained elder and returned superannuated, which relation he held but one year, and the next year he was made

presiding elder of the Vermont district; and though he was much younger than the class of men usually selected for this office, he met its responsibilities and discharged its duties with eminent success.

He was one of the delegates to the General Conference of 1824, and was the author of the chaste, beautiful, and appropriate reply to the address of the British Conference.

At the session of the Conference in 1826 he was recognised as the Principal of the Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham, an institution which was already greatly indebted to him for its position and prospects. His duties here were onerous and multiplied. The school was new, the assistants inexperienced, and the plan novel; but his education and natural talents admirably qualified him for the post. He well knew that without religion schools of learning were likely to become nurseries of vice, and he commenced his career as an instructor of youth by uniting the lessons of piety with those of wisdom, and consequently but few terms, if any, elapsed while he was at the head of this academy without a revival of religion. His biographer gives the following sketch of his mode of intercourse with the students:—"He believed that in order to secure dignity of conduct and manliness of character, it is necessary to inspire the youth with self-respect. To produce, therefore, in his mind a feeling of inferiority, he thought highly prejudicial. Hence he ever treated students, not as boys, but as young gentlemen. He addressed them as such. He put on no magisterial airs. Though strict as a disciplinarian, yet, by always treating the students with respect, he taught them in return to respect themselves and him. He never demanded any marks of courtesy or formal expressions of reverence. He thought

it better to leave this to the promptings of private feeling, believing that, if the sentiments and feelings of the student were properly trained, such expressions of respect as urbanity demands, or custom sanctions, would be spontaneously given, provided the teacher's own demeanour were such as to call them forth; but, in the absence of these, the enforcement of respect by statute, or the formal demand of it, would only create an empty parade, or perhaps awaken a spirit of resistance, more fatal to the authority of a teacher than negative rudeness."

Actuated by such motives, and governed by such principles of action, he acquired the confidence of the patrons and the affection of the students of the school, and made a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of all with whom he was associated.

He was a delegate to the General Conference of 1828, and in the same year was elected to the office of bishop of the Canada Conference. In 1829 he received the title of Doctor of Divinity, was elected President of Lagrange College, also professor in the University of Alabama; and his services were solicited by many important organizations which made lucrative offers to secure him. All these offers were declined on account of the interest he felt for the great subject of education among the Methodists of New-England, which was now to become the chief business of his life.

In all the questions of moment and importance which at that time claimed the attention of the Church, he took an active interest, devoting his energies largely to the missionary, Bible, and tract cause, and to the great subject of temperance. His frequent and protracted labours made deep inroads upon his bodily strength and awakened a deep con-

cern in the minds of his friends; but a conversation that took place between him and his wife, after his return from the General Conference of 1828, will show how they affected his own mind. "Mrs. Fisk expressed her fears that his late exertions would lay the foundation of some fatal malady. His answer was, 'I hope not; after resting I shall be better. I have, to be sure, been called to make great exertions in behalf of the Church. I have done it conscientiously and from a sense of duty; and,' added he, raising his eyes full in her face with an expression she had never seen in his countenance before, 'my dear wife, if my exertions could only be the means of uniting the Church, I am willing my life should be the sacrifice.'" He was not called to lay down the weapons of warfare, however, until he had accomplished much more for the good of the Church and the world.

In 1830 he was elected President of the Wesleyan University, which post he filled till the day of his death. Although he had taken an active part in the enterprise of founding the institution, yet when called to assume the responsibilities of the more intimate relation of President, he did it with hesitation. Two considerations seem to have influenced him. "One of these was a desire that in the contemplated institution some arrangement might be made for the benefit of the sons of his brethren in the ministry, few of whom, on account of the expense, could enjoy the advantages of a liberal education. The other was the necessity of some more efficient measures for the education of young men who might be called to the work of foreign missions; for it was evident that the arrangements of the Church for the improvement of the domestic ministry must be very inadequate to the wants of the

foreign work." Arrangements were made by which in December he left the institution with which he had been connected at Wilbraham, to enter immediately upon the duties of his new situation at Middletown. While arranging his plans for the financial affairs of the University, he enjoyed a brief interval of rest from the perplexing care and toil to which he had been subjected. It was, however, of short duration. Completing his arrangements, he entered immediately upon the business of collecting funds for the support of the new institution. The task was a discouraging one, and the difficulties connected with its performance had their effect upon his spirits, although they could not weaken his resolution. After an unpleasant journey from Springfield to Hartford, on his way to New-York, he writes to Mrs. Fisk:—

"What success I shall have in New-York is very problematical, but I must go and do what I can. . . . I rather dread engaging in these conflicts with selfishness and covetousness; but when I get well engaged, I can drive on with pretty good courage. I sometimes ask myself, Am I never to be done with these new enterprises? To be always pushing up hill is hard work, but I suppose I must tug on. Perhaps if I have any appropriate place in the army of the faithful, it is that of a pioneer. This is not the easiest department, but still I like it, because it has so much of chivalry in it, and keeps the mind so much awake to its duties. What a dull world this would have been if our Creator had left everything prepared and planned to our hands! I am glad he did not do it. It was enough that he furnished materials, and tools, and a mind, and commanded us to plan, and fashion, and execute, according to our several ability. O there is an

interest in this course which wakes up the soul and calls out the energies of the intellect, and makes man feel he does not live in vain."

In the following September the duties of the University were opened with appropriate literary ceremonies. The inaugural address was an able production, and was immediately published and widely circulated. The views contained in it elevated the new institution at once to a commanding position before the public, and gave a sufficient guarantee of the ability of its author to preside over the education of young men. The consequence was that the number of students soon became quite large.

"Dr. Fisk was now fully inducted into his new office, and found himself as much involved in business as ever. His hands, and head, and heart were completely occupied. He was again the principal of a new institution, where the foundation had to be laid and the superstructure reared. In such a situation one with his peculiar disposition would necessarily find ample occupation. All called upon him for advice or other aid, and his supervision extended everywhere. He draughted rules for the University, and framed the regulations of a boarding department; he superintended the studies in college, and the pecuniary arrangements of the prudential committee; he heard classes recite in Greek, Latin, and metaphysics, and listened to the petty details of the students' personal concerns; and while he aided the professors in the higher regions of mind, he often came down to the examination of the accounts of the institution. He was remarkably fitted for this multiplicity of business by his peculiar tact in management, his readiness and flexibility of mind, his knowledge of men, habits of order, and facility in exe-

cuting his plans. He was never embarrassed, never out of temper. Always calm, even in the midst of tumult, he never lost the control of his faculties. He exhibited such knowledge of affairs, such fertility of mind, skill, and address in transacting business as very soon convinced the prudential committee that they had no ordinary man to deal with. Skill in securing coöperation in his plans was one of his peculiar qualifications. All had confidence in his judgment, and, in most things, readily yielded to his views. His own mind seemed the centre of light and influence, and its radiations illumined all who were about him."

Of his influence upon the students too much cannot be said. No sacrifice was too costly that would secure their progress in morals and truth. He laboured indefatigably; and though his delicate health would have seemed a sufficient excuse for not attending morning prayers in the chapel at six o'clock, he insisted upon performing this duty until compelled to desist by the urgent solicitations of the faculty.

His intercourse with offending students was admirably calculated to effect a reformation. He commanded the reverence and attachment of the students. His perfect self-possession always sustained his dignity of character, and commanded respect. Yet "he was very seldom severe, occasionally sarcastic, often witty and humorous, just so as to turn the laugh upon the offender. Generally, he was mild and gentle, but never harsh nor angry." His admonitions were always directed to the moral principle involved, and he seldom failed in producing such impressions as were lasting and efficacious. The number of students dismissed during his presidency was remarkably

small; and though this is not always the best test of good government, still the unusual qualifications of Dr. Fisk, as well as the character and reputation of the institution, leave no room to doubt that it was the result of his personal influence and power.

The students of the University, dispersed as they are over the union, and filling posts of labour in foreign missions, all bear willing testimony to the faithfulness of his labours, the fervour of his zeal, the force of his example, the authority of his teaching. Though one of his successors had unquestionably a more massive intellect, and was in every other respect fully equal to the position, yet Dr. Fisk will ever be remembered by the students of Middletown as the *model President*.

He was a member of the General Conference of 1832, and in the year 1833 he was largely concerned in the Indian missions. Indeed, he may be said to have originated the mission in Oregon, which has done so much for the original inhabitants of our land, and which, having become the Oregon Conference, is doing a great and good work among the settlers of the far West.

He wrote and published stirring appeals on the subject of temperance, engaged in the Calvinistic controversy, and lent the aid of his influence to every good word and work. Meanwhile the influence of the University was extending, the number of students increasing, and, to those that did not know how much he was doing outside its walls, it seemed as though he was fully occupied with its interests. His labours were crowned with abundant success, and his prayers were answered in the spiritual growth of the students. But the exposure incident upon a series of meetings, during which all the students, with three or four

exceptions, made a profession of religion, and the necessity that was laid upon him to travel for the benefit of the pecuniary affairs of the school, prostrated his health so much that he never entirely recovered from it. The year 1834 was peculiarly trying to him, and the condition of his health led, after consultation with his medical advisers, to his voyage to Europe; but various causes delayed his departure until the fall of 1835. The results of his observations while in Europe he has published. The book shows clearly the practical character of his mind. His observations are principally directed to the literary, moral, and religious state of society rather than to descriptions of antique ruins or stupendous works of art. The eagerness with which he investigated his favourite topics, and the faithfulness with which he discusses them, operated undoubtedly injuriously upon his constitution, and probably counteracted the benefits he might otherwise have received from his tour. Yet, though he returned without material benefit to his health, he prepared this work for the press in the midst of numerous interruptions, and while discharging the ordinary duties of the University.

While absent in Europe the General Conference had elected him to the Episcopal office. Immediately on his return he gave the subject the most earnest consideration, and declined consecration in a letter full of Christian devotion and humility.

On the 1st day of August, 1838, he attended, for the last time, the Commencement of the University. The feebleness that had followed a severe attack in Pisa became daily more extreme, and, though he wrote much and preached frequently afterward, it was evident to all that his days

were numbered. The last meeting he ever attended was on the occasion of the return of the missionary whom he had selected, and whose residence among the Indians of the West had been accomplished by his energy. His last labours were in behalf of the Oregon mission.

And yet it may seriously be doubted whether all the active labours of his life, all his preaching, his devotion to missions, his interest in education, accomplished more for the world than the scenes of his sick room and his dying couch would have done could they have been seen by all as by the chosen few who were with him to the last. Death had no terrors for him, and he met it with that calmness which bespoke a soul prepared. The Wesleyan University, his English brethren, the missionary society, as well as his personal friends, were all affectionately remembered by him in his last moments.

“Sunday, the 10th of February, was a day of uncommon interest and solemnity. There was not the least prospect of his recovery, so that it was not thought necessary to restrain him from conversing, and yet his strength was not so far exhausted as to prevent the free play of his mind and feelings. The scene in his chamber was transcendently elevating. In the morning he asked Mrs. Fisk what day it was. On ascertaining, he observed, ‘This would be a good day to die.’ ‘Perhaps,’ said Mrs. Fisk, ‘the Lord will take you to his rest this day.’ ‘Then I can worship,’ was his answer, ‘with the Sabbath-keeping bands in heaven, but I cannot here.’ On being told that he always loved the Sabbath, ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘and though it was a day of toil to me, yet I loved my work. To me the Sabbath has been an emblem of that promised rest. O, that rest is sweet; it is glorious!’ He then beckoned his

adopted daughter to him, saying, 'Let us pray together;' and, throwing an arm round each of them as they kneeled before him, he offered up a prayer, gasping it out word by word, which seemed the very language of the spiritual world. It was deep, pathetic, powerful, sublime. Then, as they rose from their knees, he said, 'Vain human reasoners often tell us that the soul and the body will go down together to the dust, because the spirit is depressed when the body is; but it is not true. These clogs of earth have often retarded the operations of my mind, and been as so many barriers to its activity; but now I feel a strength of soul and an energy of mind which this body, though afflicted and pained, cannot impair. The soul has an energy of its own; and so far from my body pressing my soul down to earth, I feel as if my soul had almost power to raise the body upward and bear it away: and it will at last, by the power of God, effectually draw it to heaven, for its attractions are all thitherward.'

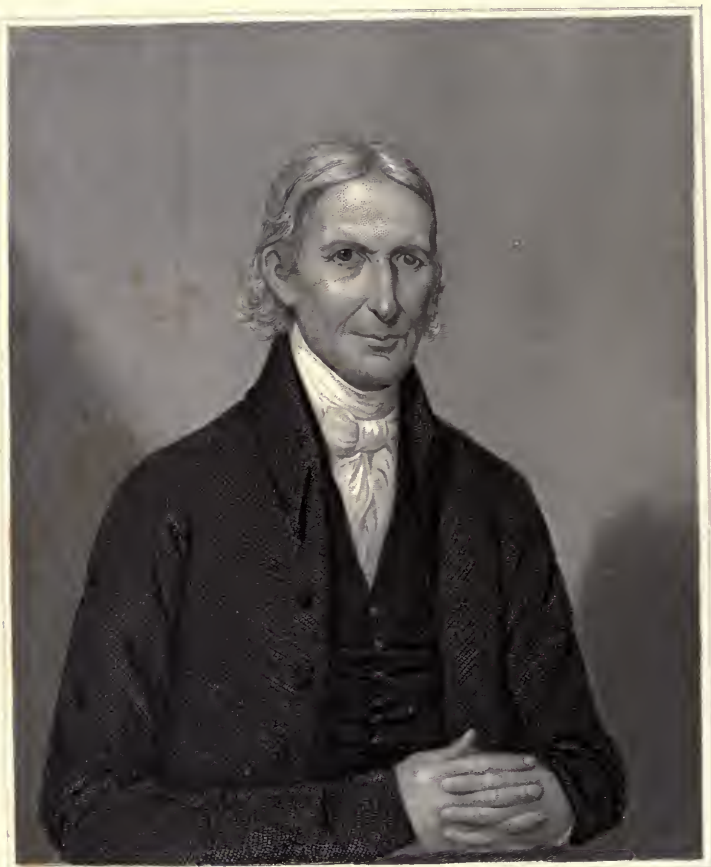
"February 14th, as his regular physician, Dr. Miner, was examining his pulse, he faintly said, 'Why do you examine the pulse without prescribing? Is it low?' 'Yes sir, very low.' 'Is it fluttering?' 'Not yet, sir.' 'Not yet?' he replied, faintly, and then sighed out, 'The hour of release is at hand.'" He lingered until the twenty-second and then died, as he had lived, in the triumphs of faith.

Thus lived and thus died this great and good man. He accomplished a great work, and filled up the measure of his days with usefulness. The impetus that his exertions gave to the missionary cause doubled the receipts of the treasury in one year. His labours established the cause of Methodist education in New-England. Singularly honoured in being elected to the episcopal office in two dis-

tinct organizations, his life was characterized by great uniform humility. As a speaker he had few equals; his graphic power of conception, his pure and felicitous expression, his collected and yet impetuous delivery, gave him the "clearness, force, and earnestness which produce conviction;" while the delicate pathos of his intonation, and the winning love of his own pure heart controlled the sympathies of his audience, and moved them at his will. In controversy he stood forth preëminently the champion of the Church; and though assailed with bitter animosity and unsparing personality, it is believed that no line or sentiment can be found in all his writings which he might wish to recall, as manifesting personal heat or a want of Christian courtesy.

He was a model worthy of imitation; lovely in private life; indefatigable in public labours; finished in scholarship; devoted in holiness; triumphant in death. Men of letters lost in him a worthy associate, and the Church her noblest son.





Engraved by Welch & Walter Philad^a from a painting by S F Nuttall

REV. GEORGE PICKERING,

NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE

George Pickering.

OUR engraving presents a very accurate likeness of the veteran Pickering in his latter years—it tells his characteristic simplicity—his quaint humour even lurks in the lines of the face, and the defect of his left eye has not escaped the attention of the artist.

GEORGE PICKERING is an historical name in the annals of New-England Methodism. Not great in talents, he was both original and great in character, and his was the peculiar power that pertains to character. Talents, without a definite character, are seldom of much avail; but well-marked character, even without notable talents, has a power of its own, often the most effective power—a power that empowers every other attribute. George Pickering's long and useful career was an illustration of this characteristic effectiveness.

He was one of the strong men—the “giants of those days”—who were sent by the old Baltimore Conference to found Methodism in the Eastern States—a corps of evangelists, which, headed by Jesse Lee, and continually recruited from the same Conference through the last decade of the last century, fought the first battles of Methodism in New-England. And they were battles such as the new sect encountered in no other field on

the continent. In most of its other fields Methodism did not find the ground prepossessed by traditional theological opinions. Within the Baltimore Conference, and south of it, the Anglican Church, by its similarity of creed and the absence of its clergy, during and after the Revolution, opened the way of Methodism. The West, so far as it was yet accessible, presented no theological prepossession, but welcomed the generous theology and heroic spirit of the new denomination as peculiarly congenial with its own character. The commixture of sects in the Middle States afforded it fair play there. But in the East it was treated by the official guardians of the "standing order" as an heretical and unconscionably pertinacious intruder. New-England was everywhere defined into parishes, and supplied with a "settled ministry." The "minister" ranked as the highest personage of the village, the magistrate and deacon ranging next in order. The people were taxed for the support of the hereditary faith. That faith was inveterately Calvinistic, and was shocked at the Arminianism of Methodism.

The appearance, in such a field as this, of a few men in Quaker-like dress, on horseback, with their whole wardrobe and library in their saddle-bags, driving to and fro with all speed, preaching day and night, "crying aloud and sparing not," was a surprise, a mystery to the staid community, most especially to the clergy, whose parish bounds were incessantly crossed and recrossed with as little regard as if they were indeed but "imaginary lines." They were tolerated, of course, for that the law required; but in some cases they were denied everything else but toleration—even the most ordinary hospitalities. Lee records repeated visits to the same village where the

people came to the court-house to hear him, but coolly allowed him, after the discourse, to mount his horse and ride away without a single invitation to "call at any man's home." "God only knows," he wrote, "what I have had to endure;" and again he says, "If the Lord did not comfort me, in hoping against hope, or believing against appearances, I should depart from the work in this part of the world."

The men who came to the help of Lee in this formidable field were among the most effective preachers of Methodism known in that day. Dr. George Roberts, Daniel Smith, Jacob Brush, John Bloodgood, Nathaniel B. Mills, Hope Hull, Joshua Taylor, Daniel Ostrander, John Broadhead, Shadrach Bostwick, William Beauchamp, and, not the least, George Pickering, were of the number. They were "master-builders;" and the subsequent symmetry and firmness of the structure of Methodism in the East, is owing to the manner in which they laid its foundations.

Pickering was born in Talbot County, Maryland, in 1769. He was converted at the age of eighteen in St. George's Church, Philadelphia, and joined the Baltimore Conference in 1790. His first appointment was on the old Northampton Circuit, in Virginia. After a thorough induction into the hardships of itinerant life in Virginia and Maryland, he was sent by Asbury to New-England, about four years subsequent to the arrival of Lee. Lee, Cooper, Roberts, Ostrander, Mudge, and some twenty other itinerants, were now abroad in the same field, and welcomed him to their conflicts and their victories. His first appointment (1793) in the East was on Hartford (Conn.) Circuit.

We give in detail his subsequent appointments—a striking example of Methodist itinerancy. In 1794, Tolland;

1795, Lynn; 1796, Boston and Needham; the following four years, presiding elder of the New-England District, including the whole field of Methodism in the New-England States, except Maine and Connecticut. We can scarcely form a conception, amid the facilities of travelling in these days, of the vast journies and labours comprised in this extraordinary district. Commencing at Providence, it extended down the Providence River, taking in the appointments on both its shores, to Newport; thence it reached to the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket; thence it swept the whole of Cape Cod, to Provincetown, and returning, took in all the eastern portion of Massachusetts, extended to all the interior appointments of the State, except one on its western boundary, and penetrated through New-Hampshire to beyond the centre of Vermont. In 1801, he was appointed to Boston, Lynn, and Marblehead; 1802, Salisbury and Hawke; the following four years, Boston District; 1807, the city of Boston; 1809, he was missionary at large; then on Boston District again for four years; 1813, 1814, Boston city; the ensuing two years, Lynn; 1817, Boston District for four years; the next three years, missionary at large; 1824, missionary at Newburyport and Gloucester; the next five years, missionary at large; 1830, 1831, Easton and Bridgewater; 1832, Lowell; 1833, Cambridge; 1834, Worcester; 1835, Marblehead and Salem; 1836, Charlestown; 1837, Watertown Mission; 1838, Wafertown and Waltham; 1839, Roxbury; 1840, 1841, Weston; 1842, Saxonville; 1843, Church-street, Boston; 1844, 1845, Medford; 1846, North Reading—remarkable record of tireless travels, labours, and privations, in the work of his Divine Master, during fifty-seven years! There is a severe and significant clo-

quence in this bare recital of names and dates, which no comments can enhance.

He was a member of every General Conference of the Church, save two, during forty years. Down to the year 1836 his name had in every instance been placed first on the New-England delegation. At that session, and also the one of 1840, it was displaced by the names of the two principal leaders of the Secession which soon followed. In 1844 he reappeared in that venerable body; it was the last session in his life, and it was his affliction to witness the deplorable scene of the division of the Church. In the General Conference of 1808, he was a member of the committee which first projected a *delegated* General Conference.

He was emphatically an itinerant. His early habits of travel clung to him through life. Nine years he spent as a missionary at large in the Conference—a work for which he was peculiarly fitted—and during sixteen years he travelled extended and laborious districts as a Presiding Elder.

About three miles from the village of Watertown, Mass., is a rural spot of no little landscape beauty, and memorable in the primitive history of Methodism—once the homestead of Abraham Bemis. The journals of the early Methodist preachers abound in allusions to it. Asbury, Whatcoat, Lee, Hedding, Roberts, &c., used to turn aside to it, as pilgrims to a shrine or mariners to a favourite haven. After ascending a winding road from Watertown, among hills and richly-cultivated farms, the traveller is led, by a private way, through attractive landscapes, to an unpretending but spacious and comfortable mansion, which stands on the southern side of an amphitheatre of hills.

The enclosed area is about half a mile in diameter, and presents charming prospects in all directions. The house was, in the first years of Methodism, embosomed in orchards, under which the great men of the Church in that day preached sermons that made the amphitheatre echo. The Methodist society of the town was formed here, and Abraham Bemis and his family became its first members. Hundreds heard the gospel in its power on his premises, and doubtless many still look down from heaven with gladness upon the memorable spot. His hospitality seemed only to enhance his prosperity; his property increased, all his household and many of his other kindred became members of the Church, and the good old saint, who welcomed the pilgrims of the Lord in the day of their adversity, at last went to heaven, "triumphant in the faith and hope of the gospel," at the ripe age of eighty-seven years.

His daughter, Mary Bemis, was received into the Church when about seventeen years old, and in two years afterward became the wife of George Pickering, who at last inherited the consecrated homestead, and maintained to the end its old hospitality. We give a finely-engraved picture of this mansion. It is an historical monument of our cause.

The marriage of Pickering was in all respects a happy one. Through his long life, most of it spent in absence as a travelling preacher, his home was an asylum to which, at his regular periodical times and at no others, he returned to find solace and repose from his labours and trials. The only detraction from its enjoyments was the thought that so many of his heroic fellow-labourers had no similar shelter for themselves or their families; with them, however, he ever wished to share his happiness. His doors were always





open to receive them, and many a way-worn prophet has sent up his evening prayer, and sung a matin hymn of gratitude beneath his roof.

Many—most, indeed—of our first Methodist preachers had to locate for a part of their lives, at least, in order to provide for their families. Of six hundred and fifty who had been on the minutes by the end of the last century, five hundred died in the local ranks, and most of the remainder had located; though, on becoming relieved of domestic embarrassments, they were able to reënter the itinerancy and to die in it. George Pickering is one of the few who never located. His happy marriage, and happy home at Watertown, relieved him from the sad necessity. Nor did he, as is often the case, abuse his providential comforts by self-indulgence, by retreating from his post unduly to enjoy them. His rigour in this respect was one of the characteristic traits of his life; it was, perhaps, unparalleled, and, we are inclined to say, too severe. He never entered his home, as we have said, except at the assigned periodical times. Only one-fifth of his married life—ten years in fifty—were spent under his own roof! His strictness in this respect reminds us of the noble, but defective virtue of the old Roman character. If business called him to the town of his family residence, at other times than those appropriated to his domestic visits, he returned to his post of labour without crossing the threshold of his home. In that terrible calamity which spread gloom over the land—the burning of the steamer *Lexington*, by night, on Long Island Sound—he lost a beloved daughter. The intensity of the affliction was not capable of enhancement, yet he stood firmly on his ministerial watch-tower, though with a bleeding heart, while his family, but a few miles distant, were frantic with

anguish. Not till the due time did he return to them; when it arrived, he entered his home with a sorrow-smitten spirit, pressed in silence the hand of his wife, and, without uttering a word, retired to an adjoining room, where he spent some hours in solitude and unutterable grief.

That home, the scene of so many triumphs of grace, so much hospitality, and so much happiness, was at last made memorable as the dying scene of the apostolic veteran—*the oldest travelling Methodist preacher in the world at the time.** It has been our honour to be a guest within its walls occasionally; but our most esteemed privilege of the kind was to witness the aged preacher's last triumph there. We rode out to the mansion in company with the Methodist preachers of Boston. Such was his extreme feebleness, that visitors, and even audible devotional exercises, had been almost entirely inadmissible in his chamber. It was feared, therefore, before our arrival, that it would be possible only for us to send up to him the assurance of our Christian regard, without the privilege of a personal interview. At his own request, however, we were all permitted to approach his bedside. A scene ensued there which no pen can describe. As it was impossible for him to address the visitors individually, one of them was designated to speak to him in behalf of all; but under the necessary restriction of doing so in the briefest possible manner. On taking the hand of the aged sufferer, he opened his eyes, and showed his recognition of

* There were, the last year of his life, but two members of American Conferences (Ezekiel Cooper and Joshua Wells) who preceded him, and but fourteen in England; they had all, however, retired from actual service.—*Memorials of Methodism.*

the brother addressing him, by tears of affection. The following brief conversation ensued:—

“Beloved father, a number of your ministerial brethren are present, and have requested me to express to you their Christian affection and sympathy.”

He replied, with strong emphasis and tears, “I thank you; you all have a high place in my affection.”

“They are happy to learn that, in this your extremity, you are still rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.”

“Yes! O yes!”

“That you feel that the sting of death is extracted.”

“Yes! O yes!”

“And that you can resign yourself fully into the hands of your Lord.”

“Yes, O yes; glory be to his name!”

Grasping the hand of the brother addressing him with still firmer hold, he then, with tears and sobs, exclaimed:—

“You all have my high esteem and affection. Tell, O tell the brethren to preach Christ and him crucified—an all-able, all-powerful, all-willing, all-ready Saviour—a present Saviour, *saving now*. Preach, ‘Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.’ O, tell them to preach *holiness*: holiness is the principal thing. Preach holiness, holiness—God enable you to preach holiness.”

His emotions overcame him—he attempted to say more, but the brother conducting the conversation closed it by saying:—

“We thank God, dear father, for the good testimony and counsel we have been permitted to receive from you; we shall never forget it. We regret that your condition will not allow us to linger longer with you; we take our leave, to meet you in heaven. God bless you! Farewell!”

The scene was touching and sublime—a hoary and heroic veteran of the cross was standing between both worlds, about to disappear from his fellow-labourers forever on earth. Full of years, and virtues, and services, he was now victorious over death, and giving his departing counsels to his brethren. We broke away from the room, so near the gate of heaven, with deep emotions, and assembled in the parlour below, where we sung, within reach of his hearing,

“On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand,” &c.

After which the company knelt in prayer, and committing the venerable saint, his family, and ourselves to God, we returned to the city, thanking God, “who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ,” and feeling that we had enjoyed a memorable day.

The hero of so many fields died as he had lived—victorious. His last distinct utterance was, “All my affairs for time and eternity are settled. Glory be to God!” And the last whisper caught by his attendants, was the word “GLORY!”

George Pickering was a perfect Christian gentleman. He was neat in his person even to preciseness. He retained, to the end of his life, the plain costume of our first ministry, and it was always brushed to the last degree of cleanliness. No man in New-England ever wore less soiled shoes. His care in these respects was fastidious, to be sure, but it was characteristic, and if erring, erred on the right side. In manners he was without ceremony, but equally exempt from negligence. No one ever saw in George Pickering a questionable point of manners, in whatever place or company. He exemplified, as well as

any man we ever knew, that best proof of the true gentleman, manners without mannerism.

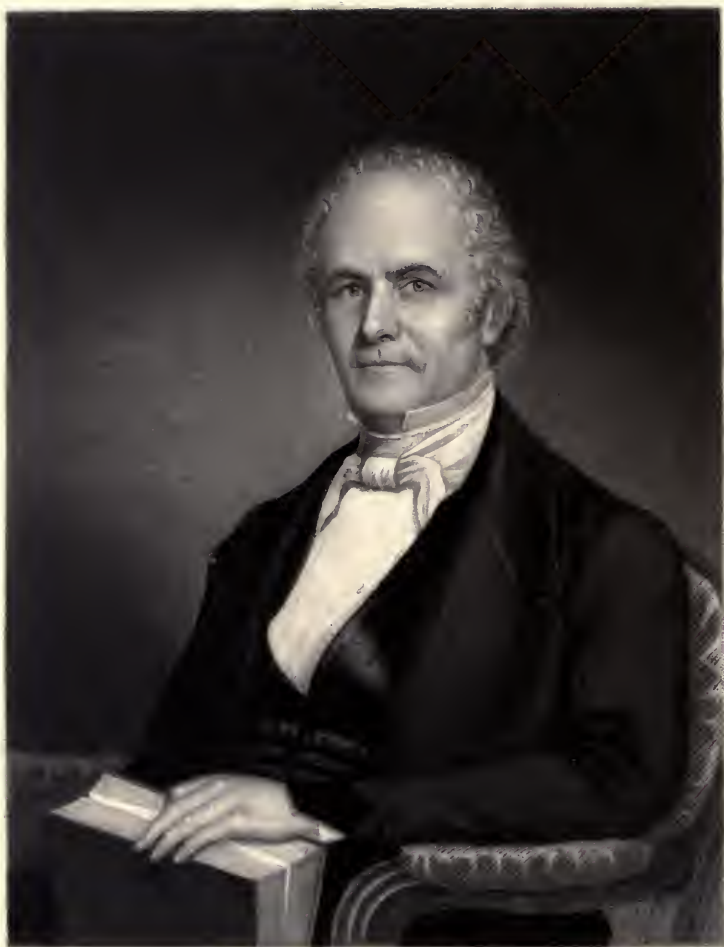
As a preacher he was always brief, direct, very systematic and perspicuous, and he never failed to close his remarks with a distinct, powerful, and home-addressed exhortation. There was a dry, pithy humour playing through his conversation, and it often darted out in his discourses. We never knew a single instance, however, in which it became personal sarcasm, or could give pain to the hearer.

There was much of what was called "the philosopher" about him. He could not be surprised or thrown off his guard. His characteristic precision extended to his habits of diet, of sleeping, and rising. He never spoke but to the point, and avoided men of many words. He never occupied five minutes at a time in Conference discussions. He never showed very strong emotions, either of joy or grief. His life, after taking its designation, kept right onward, wavering not, faltering not, till he entered the gate of heaven.

His moral traits were strong and steadfast. He was a man of faith, of habitual prayer, of decided tenacity for his Arminian sentiments, of deliberate, unshakable courage, and of the strictest conscientiousness.

"Such was George Pickering," says one who knew him well; "pure in character, laborious in life, triumphant in death." What more need be said of him?





ENGRAVED BY E. L. JONES, FROM THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY JAMES PINE.

REV. NOAH LEVINGS, D. D.,

*late of the New York Conference, and
Financial Secretary
of the American Bible Society,*

Noah Levings.

It is the object of this article to give a brief sketch of the life and character of an eminent servant of God, who, during more than thirty years' service in the ministry, filled with honour and success the various stations and offices to which he was called—everywhere winning the affections of the people, and at all times enjoying the confidence and esteem of his brethren, till he was suddenly summoned from his work to his reward.

NOAH LEVINGS was born in Cheshire County, New-Hampshire, on the 29th of September, 1796. His parents being in humble circumstances, he was sent from home to earn a livelihood when about eight or nine years of age. From that time he shared but few of the joys or advantages of the parental home. But, even among comparative strangers, the amiableness of his character and the faithfulness of his service everywhere secured for him friends. His early advantages for mental improvement were very limited—a source of much regret to him in after life. In his case, it was a matter of little consequence that the public schools were poorly supported and poorly conducted; that textbooks were defective and teachers incompetent. To him, thirsting for knowledge, yet from very childhood compelled to toil for his daily bread, the few advantages they

did afford would have been regarded as a boon above all price.

His early religious impressions were deep and lasting. But experimental religion was little known at that period within the circle of his acquaintance. High Calvinism had begotten its opposite in error—Universalism, and the two opinions were in conflict for the mastery. It could not be doubtful, (apart from divine interposition,) in an age when the tone of piety and of morals was emphatically low, which would have the vantage-ground in the contest. The one required morality—nay, piety, after its kind; the other dispensed with both, while at the same time its “policies of insurance” were issued on the largest scale. In such a contest, carried on in such an age, the chances were on the side of the scheme which promised most and required least. Nor have we any doubt that Universalism would long since have obtained the mastery in New-England, had not the fermenting mass been impregnated with the leaven of a purer faith and a richer experience. Divine Providence raised up a people to proclaim a free, a present, and a full salvation; this, by the new elements of Christian power it evoked, has proved a check and an antidote to the system of religious licentiousness which was sweeping over the land like a flood.

At the age of sixteen the subject of our memoir was apprenticed to a blacksmith in Troy, his parents having previously removed to that place. When he entered upon his new situation he formed the resolution to be faithful to his master, and regard his interests as his own. His morals were placed in great peril. His master was not religious, and did not pretend to control him upon the Sabbath; and he was led into the company of Sabbath-breakers, and with

them spent much holy time in roaming over the fields and through the woods adjacent to the city. But his natural good sense, and the uncorrupted moral principles inculcated in early life, soon came to his relief. His parents, though not professedly pious, had trained their children to a strict observance of the Christian Sabbath, and now the moral influence of that early training revived and wrought his deliverance, as it has that of thousands of young men similarly exposed.

Breaking away from these associations, he determined to become a regular attendant upon the worship of God in some one of the churches. All Churches were alike to him, for he had not become familiar with the creeds of any, nor, indeed, scarcely with the peculiarities in their forms of worship. He therefore determined upon a circuit of visitation to the several churches in the city; and, in carrying out this design, he first visited the Presbyterian Church, then under the pastoral charge of Rev. Jonas Coe, D. D.; who, he says, "was a good man and an excellent pastor." He next attended the Baptist Church, where "good old Mr. Wayland (the father of President Wayland) was the minister." Though favourably impressed with the piety and abilities of both of these servants of God, he could not feel at home in their congregations. His third visit was made to the Protestant Episcopal Church, but there he was wearied with ceremonies too numerous and complicated to be either interesting or edifying. He next attended the meeting of the Friends; but here, instead of long prayers and tedious ceremonies, he heard nothing at all; nor was he loth to leave when the hour was up and the sign for closing given.

His last visit of inquiry was at the Methodist Episcopal

Church. He found a small house, occupied by a simple, plain, and solemn people. Their worship, though not imposing in its forms, was hearty and sincere. It not a little surprised him to witness, for the first time in his life, a congregation kneeling down in time of prayer. The conviction was wrought in his mind that this people were the people of God. Under the ministry of the word, feelings were awakened which he had known nowhere else; and under the powerful reasonings and cogent appeals of the Rev. P. P. Sandford, the stationed minister, he was often made to feel that God truly was in that place. But it was more particularly under the preaching of the Rev. Laban Clark, who succeeded Mr. Sandford, that he was led to realize fully his lost condition, and to feel the necessity of seeking salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. On one occasion he left the church so overwhelmed with the consciousness of his guilt and wretchedness, that he almost bordered upon despair. The struggles of his soul were deep and powerful; and in the privacy of his closet he wrestled and agonized before God. This was long before he had broken the secret of his heart even to his most intimate friends. He at length unburdened his mind to a pious young man of his acquaintance. By this young man he was taken to the prayer-meeting, then held at the house of Dr. Landon, a man of God now departed to his rest, but whose memory is like "ointment poured forth." Here the young inquirer became more perfectly instructed in the way of salvation by faith, and was also a subject of special and earnest prayer.

He sought God sincerely and unreservedly: he prayed earnestly, and with many tears. There was no tie that he would not sunder, and no sacrifice that he would not make,

if necessary, to secure the favour of his offended Lord. Yet his conversion was less sudden, and less strongly marked in its character, than that of many others. He was rather "drawn with the cords of a man and with the bands of love," than driven by the thunders of the law; though each had their appropriate influence in leading him to the Saviour. Nor was the evidence of his change either sudden or clear. Upon this point he remained for a long time in a state of most distressing uncertainty. From the consciousness of guilt he had been delivered; but the witness of his adoption was necessary to complete his joy.

It was not till the 5th of June, 1815, that he was enabled to rejoice in this long-sought blessing. On that day—a day ever memorable in his history—as he was returning from his private devotions, where he had been wrestling with God for the witness of the Spirit, light broke in upon his soul, and he could exclaim, "Abba, Father," with an unwavering tongue. The power of the tempter was broken; his doubts were all gone. A divine assurance—the gift of the Holy Spirit—reigned in his soul, and filled him with unspeakable joy. His swelling heart, overflowing with emotion, gave vent to its transports, while he cried aloud,—

"My God is reconciled;
His pard'ning voice I hear:
He owns me for his child;
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father, cry."

But before obtaining this full assurance he had publicly dedicated himself to Christ, by uniting with his Church, and boldly advocating his cause. He joined the Methodist

Society as a probationer in 1813. The circumstances are thus related by the venerable minister of God who seems to have been the principal instrument of his conversion:— One day an apprentice-boy, in his blacksmith's garb, direct from his labour, called upon him, and made application to be received into the society. He appeared to be about sixteen years of age; was small in stature, bashful in his address, and the circumstances of his introduction were peculiar and somewhat disadvantageous. Yet there was something so unassuming and so winning in his manner, so sincere and so intelligent in his whole appearance and conversation, that a very favourable impression was made upon the mind of the preacher, and he admitted him as a probationer; at the same time giving him encouragement and counsel. On the following Wednesday night, at their public prayer-meeting, when the leading members had prayed, and it was nearly time to dismiss the congregation, at the close of one of the prayers a youthful voice, whose feminine tones were scarcely sufficient to fill the church, was heard some two-thirds down the aisle, leading in prayer. The prayer was feeling and appropriate, but short—so short as to be, at the longest, comprised within a minute. As the preacher passed down the aisle, his blacksmith boy stood at the end of the seat, waiting to grasp his hand with Christian affection. On the next Wednesday evening, the silvery tones of the same youthful voice were again heard, near the close of the meeting, leading in its devotions. At this time he prayed with more fervour, more compass of thought, and more self-possession; and yet his prayer was not more than a minute and a half. At the close of the meeting, as the official brethren gathered around the preacher, one inquired who that boy was;

another said his forwardness must be checked ; and a third, that he must be stopped altogether. The preacher simply replied, "Now, brethren, let that boy alone,—there is something in him more than you are aware of;" and from that time no one questioned the right of the young blacksmith boy to officiate in the public prayer-meetings.

Such were the public beginnings of one who in after years became eminent as a minister of the gospel, distinguished alike for the ability and the success with which he preached "Christ crucified." Even the minister of God who had cherished him as a lovely and promising youth, little realized the chain of causes he was setting in motion, and the results that would grow out of them. He had gathered a chance jewel from among the cinders of the blacksmith's shop ; but little did he comprehend the richness of its value, or the transcendent lustre its polished surface would assume. So often does God make "the weak things" of earth praise him, and "the day of small things" to become glorious before him.

It is remarkable that the two eminent servants of God, who were mainly instrumental in his conversion, are still in the effective ranks, enjoying a green old age, cheered, loved, and honoured by their brethren who have grown up around them. The next preacher stationed in Troy was the Rev. Tobias Spicer. To the instructions of this eminently sound and judicious minister, as well as to those of the Rev. Messrs. Clark and Chichester, the young disciple was much indebted in his early Christian history. He says (in his journal) that they seemed to labour less to excite a momentary feeling, than to produce a solid and permanent religious character ; one that would be most likely to withstand the shocks of temptation, and to

accumulate strength through every period of its future experience. Nor did he cease to acknowledge his obligations to these men of God till his dying day. Well had it been for thousands of sincere and susceptible young men, could they have been favoured with equally competent and judicious advisers. While the youthful character is in this transition state, the influences brought to bear upon it make a deep and generally ineffaceable impression; and, for weal or woe, will they continue to bring forth life-long results. The proper training of young converts, and especially of young men in the Christian Church, is a work of as high moment in the magnitude of its results as that of the mere instrumentality of their conversion. For the want of sound Christian nurture, thousands cease to be of any account in the Church, just at a point when their usefulness should be taking direction and acquiring character.

During the pastoral labours of Mr. Spicer in Troy, there was a very extensive work of God in the Church; so extensive that the membership were increased from a hundred and seven to two hundred and fifty during the two years. The church edifice was small, plain, and unimposing; the membership were few in number, and poor in worldly means—not many rich, not many great, not many noble were found among them. But they were devoted to God, and loved one another; and God put honour upon them, making them to abound in fruitfulness and joy. This revival, in an especial manner, awakened the zeal and called out the talents of young Levings. He had been converted at a time when no special revival was in progress; and the awakening and conversion of such multitudes seemed to fill him with astonishment and wonder,

while at the same time it fired his own heart anew. He had already become an efficient teacher in the first Sabbath school established in Troy, and then sustained by the different denominations of evangelical Christians. While yet in his minority he was appointed a class-leader; and when, at the Conference of 1817, the Rev. S. Luckey succeeded Mr. Spicer in charge of the station, he gave him license to exhort. On the 20th day of December following, being then a few months over twenty-one, he was duly licensed as a local preacher by the quarterly conference of the station.

Up to this time he appears to have had no distinct idea of entering the ministry. He had, indeed, an ardent desire to do all he could for the glory of God and for the salvation of men; but, so high appeared to him to be the qualifications necessary for a Christian minister, and so small and insignificant did his own appear to himself, that entering the sacred office seemed entirely out of the question. His mind had been at ease under this view of the subject; but now it came up before him in a new and stronger light. He was out of his apprenticeship; he was also of age; the responsibility of determining his future course now devolved upon himself. He wished to do right; he had an ardent desire to do good; he was wedded in his affections to the Church of God; he groaned in spirit for the salvation of a dying world. And yet the magnitude of the work, the fearful and far-reaching nature of its responsibilities, appalled him. After many struggles of mind, he was at length led to the determination to follow the convictions of duty and the openings of Providence. Accordingly, on the 7th of March, 1818, his license to preach was renewed, and he was recommended to the New-York

Annual Conference. The session of the Conference was held in May following, in the city of New-York. He was here received on trial and appointed to the Leyden Circuit, having the Rev. Ibri Cannon for his senior preacher and superintendent.

If it had cost him a struggle to decide upon entering the ministry, he was now subject to a trial of a different character, but scarcely less painful to youthful sensibilities. He had been appointed to a distant circuit, and must now bid adieu to the home and the cherished friends of his youth. And then the prospect before him was by no means congenial to the feelings of a young man of a feeble constitution and a timid nature. An extensive circuit, embracing the roughest portions of Massachusetts, and spreading out over the hills of Vermont—giving promise of long rides through cold and mountainous regions and over bad roads, and also of much labour and but little worldly reward—was a prospect that might have disheartened a mind of less nerve or a soul of weaker faith. But he had put his hand to the gospel plough; and he could say, "None of these things move me." He left home for his appointment the day after he received it. After a ride of fifty miles on horseback, over roads rendered difficult by the thawing and heaving of the frost, having crossed the Green Mountains and descended into the valley of the Deerfield River, in a spot encircled by mountains covered with their ancient forests, he found himself upon the borders of his circuit. Leyden Circuit, in 1818, included all that tract of country from the Green Mountains on the west to the Connecticut River on the east, embracing portions of the counties of Bennington and Windham, in Vermont, and of Franklin and Berkshire, in

Massachusetts. Among the towns and villages in which he and his colleague preached, were Readsboro', Whittingham, Wilmington, Halifax, Guilford, Vernon, Brattleboro', Marlboro', and Dummerston, in Vermont; and Leyden, Bernardston, Northfield, Gill, Shelburne, Colerain, Charlemont, Rowe, Monroe, and Florida, in Massachusetts. Dummerston on the northern, and Shelburne on the southern extremity of the circuit were some fifty miles apart. Northfield, the eastern appointment, was on the east side of the Connecticut River; and Florida, the western limit, was hid among the Green Mountains, near the western border of the State. One round of the circuit required a ride of not far from two hundred and fifty miles. To *traverse* this region at all seasons of the year, and in all kinds of weather, was no light undertaking. But to preach and lead class three times upon the Sabbath, frequently riding from five to ten miles between the afternoon and evening appointments, and then, after long rides during the day, to preach several evenings in each week, was a labour that required a robust constitution and a determined spirit. What, but the love of souls, could have constrained these men of God to such sacrifices and such labours?

The modification of the circuit system has been a natural and necessary result of the growth and increase of Methodism. By this modification, the labours of the preachers, so far as it regards long rides and frequent exposures, have been much abridged; without, however, abridging in the least their opportunities of labouring to build up the kingdom of Christ. Restricted as may now seem many of our little stations, or "patches," as they have been sometimes called by way of derision, when compared with the old circuits, we doubt not but that the most laborious servant

of God might find sufficient to do in them to employ his whole time and consume his whole energy. The time necessarily spent formerly in accomplishing the long rides of the circuit, now rigidly devoted to earnest, faithful pastoral visitation, would not only furnish bodily exercise, but also tell in its influence upon the spirituality and usefulness of the minister. Nor should it be forgotten that the present arrangement of our stations, as well as the increasing intelligence of our people, requires an amount of exhausting intellectual labour utterly impracticable under a *régime* like the old circuit system. Indeed, such a system—admirably adapted as it is to a country sparsely settled, and to the culture of weak societies widely scattered—becomes impracticable in a densely populated religious communion. It is one of the glories of Methodism that in all its economy, merely prudential, it possesses a flexibility that will ever adapt it to its changing circumstances, and to the wants of its growing communion. If, however, any one should be unable to satisfy his longings for amplitude of space wherein to exercise his powers, we advise him to emigrate to some country where a sparser population is to be found; to decamp forthwith for the prairies of the West, where his powers may have full scope, while he skirts along the vast range of the western borders of civilization. The moon-struck wight, who now sighs for the good old days of long-circuit riding, may be placed in the same category with those censors, who, making war upon the fashions of this degenerate age, would have us go back to the buckskin breeches and coon-skin caps worn by our ancestors, when forests were to be levelled and fields cleared for the habitations of men.

Upon the Leyden Circuit the preacher was well received:

his piety and sincerity were so strongly marked that they won the entire confidence of the people. There was also a timidity in his manner, and an exquisite sensibility in his character, which took strong hold upon their sympathies. When standing in the pulpit he was often unable to look his congregation in the face, so great was his timidity; but the earnestness of his zeal and the deep emotions of his soul, often expressed by the tears that flowed plentifully down over his face, found a response in the hearts of his congregation. The growth of his personal piety and the cultivation of his mind were objects of deep interest to him. To promote the former, he watched, prayed, fasted, and meditated; he studied with devout attention the Holy Scriptures, and read with deep interest the lives of holy and devoted servants of God, that he might understand their character, imitate their example, and be imbued with their spirit. Of his desire to improve his mind, he gave evidence by his devotion to study whenever he arrived at one of those delightful homes for the itinerant scattered here and there over the circuit, and where he rested a day or two to recruit his exhausted powers for new fatigues. Solid attainments in both piety and learning, he felt were indispensable to him as a Christian minister. No amount of knowledge or sprightliness of talent would, he knew, answer as a substitute for sound, genuine piety. Learning, unsanctified by religion, unwarmed by love, would be, like the mountain iceberg, splendid and imposing in appearance, but chilling and freezing in influence. But, on the other hand, zeal, and even a well-intentioned piety, would not answer as a substitute for a sound knowledge of divine things.

It was under the influence of such convictions as these, that he was led to apply himself diligently to the cultiva-

tion of both heart and intellect. And, no doubt, here among the hills and mountains of Leyden, while preaching to small and unlettered congregations, gathered for the most part in private rooms and school-houses, it was that he laid the foundation of that character which afterward bore him up through a long and successful ministry in many of the most responsible and important appointments within the wide range of the New-York Conference. Many young men have set out with as good promise and as high hopes as the subject of our memoir; but, imagining themselves straitened and cramped in their genius by small congregations and a rude field of labour, have flattered themselves that they would put forth their energies when assigned to more responsible and prominent posts. Thus self-deceived, and lured into a species of mental dissipation, before they were aware of it, their habits have become formed and their mental character fixed; and thenceforward, though the goal was often seen in the distance, and a spark of momentary ambition awakened, it soon subsided, and their lives flowed on in one sluggish and unvarying course. One of our most eminent divines and eloquent preachers once said to me, that many of his most finished and effective discourses were elaborated while travelling among the hills of upper Pennsylvania, and were first preached to congregations of ten or a dozen Germans gathered into log school-houses. Those same discourses have since been listened to with admiration by immense audiences in several of our large cities.

The spring at length came, and the session of Conference was drawing near. The young itinerant found it hard to part with the people of his charge. They had greeted him in their dwellings, and stayed up his hands in their congre-

gations. When dispirited and care-worn they had cheered and comforted him; in sickness they had watched over him and hailed with joy his returning health; and together had they shared the common sympathies and joys of the people of God. He had suffered in his long rides and fatiguing labours; he had been drenched by the falling rain; he had been chilled by the piercing cold as he traversed the bleak hills of his circuit; by night as well as by day had he been in peril, as he threaded his path through miry and toilsome ways. But the very scenes of his toils and his trials had become endeared to him by the honour God had placed upon him, and the favour he had given him in the eyes of the people. His last round upon his circuit was, no less to the people than to himself, an affecting, weeping time.

On the 29th of April he re-crossed the Green Mountains; and on the 1st of May reached the city of Troy, which was to be the seat of the Conference that year. His welcome by his brethren was such as to assure him that he had not lost his place in their affections. The next day, being Sunday, he preached to a crowded house, in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. The Conference adjourned on the 14th, and he received his appointment as junior preacher on Pownal Circuit. It was but sixteen miles distant; and the evening of the same day of his appointment found him within the bounds of his charge. This was to him a delightful year, spent among a kind and loving people. He was still ardent in the prosecution of his studies and earnest in the cultivation of his piety. During this year he had deep and powerful convictions upon the subject of entire sanctification; and frequent and protracted were his struggles for the attainment of this blessing. Nor

were those struggles in vain ; though he failed, "because of unbelief," to enter into that glorious rest, his piety became more deep, solid, and ardent.

In 1820 he was ordained deacon by Bishop George, and appointed to Montgomery Circuit. This year exceeded in toils and hardships either of the former years of his itinerancy. His health became so enfeebled by labour and exposure, that on his return to Troy in the spring his friends were greatly alarmed, and all regarded him as already marked for an early grave. Yet he received his appointment, determined, if he fell, to fall at his post. The appointment, Saratoga Circuit, proved highly favourable. He recovered his health, and his labours on the circuit were very acceptable and useful. While on Montgomery Circuit he had been united in marriage to Miss Sarah Clark, who, after sharing with him the varied experience of an itinerant's life for nearly thirty years, is left in lonely widowhood by his demise.

Near the close of his year on Saratoga Circuit, the presiding elder of that district, the Rev. D. Ostrander, communicated to him that the bishop, at the ensuing Conference, purposed sending him to the northern part of Vermont. This information he had left with the presiding elder, directing him to communicate it just before the Conference, so that he might have an opportunity to visit his friends and make preparations for removing ; and probably, also, that his mind might be in some measure prepared for a post involving much labour and privation. The reflections of the young minister on the reception of this by no means welcome intelligence, are worthy of being preserved as illustrative of his character, and of the principles that actuated him in his work :—

“It is understood that preachers in that part of the work fare rather poorly with regard to temporal things. This, with some other considerations, has rendered it rather an unwelcome lot to many. But I shall interpose no objection to going. For, 1. It is purely an episcopal appointment. 2. I am willing to take my share of the hard as well as the pleasant appointments. 3. I am now young, and have no family except a wife; and we, being both young and in good health, can go as well as not,—at any rate, better now than at any future period. 4. Having thrown myself upon the providence of God, as a Methodist travelling preacher, it would illy become me to forestall that providence and choose for myself. 5. I wish at all times to have the satisfaction of knowing that I am in the order of God, and then I can go to him at all times with confidence, for relief in trouble and for help in labour.”

Accordingly, at the ensuing Conference—having been ordained elder—he was sent to Middlebury, Vermont. He commenced his ministry by discoursing from the text, “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” And this text he placed before himself as the rule or formula after which his ministrations were to be modelled. The people received him with joy, sustained his hands in the work, and his labours were crowned with good results. The next year he was stationed in Burlington. We find him, while in these two appointments, still intent upon improving his mind and heart. “I feel,” he would exclaim, “the want of more retirement for prayer and meditation, and for a closer application to study. Nothing but a closer application to study, accompanied with much prayer, will ever burst the bands of ignorance and darkness from my mind.

Nothing but this will enable me to fathom and unfold the depths and the fulness of the divine word. Nothing but this will make me 'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,' skilfully and successfully preaching the 'gospel of the kingdom.' How much have I yet to learn of God, of myself, of my duty, of my privileges, and of the best manner of doing good! O Lord, teach me by thy Holy Spirit; and help me to be diligent in all things." Such were the aspirations of the youthful minister! Such his longings after God! Such his zeal to qualify himself to sustain the high responsibilities of his ministry!

Among the many books he read about this time, was the Life of Napoleon. The history and character of the emperor started in his mind a problem which has no doubt often troubled many a devout and sincere inquirer; and which can be solved only by a sense of the dimness of our spiritual vision and the gross sordidness of our nature, even under the most favourable circumstances. When men are ready to make such sacrifices, brave such dangers, endure such labours, and ever manifest such sleepless, untiring zeal for earthly good, the possession of which is so transitory, and its enjoyment so imperfect, why is it that Christians, professing to believe in all the solemn realities of eternity—the enduring bliss of heaven—are so feeble and languid in their efforts to secure an immortal crown? "Did we but labour with as much diligence and zeal for the incorruptible, as Napoleon did for the corruptible crown, what victories over the world, the flesh, and the devil should we achieve! How much good we should do, and how much happiness we should enjoy!"

While at Burlington he made frequent excursions into the neighbouring towns and villages, preaching the gospel

with varied success. He would often leave home with a range of appointments for each evening running through two weeks. In some of these appointments he would meet with opposition, in others a hearty welcome. Sometimes his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and with great power, so that the breath of the Lord came down, and, in a mighty gale, swept over the valley of dry bones. These evangelical labours he prosecuted with even more success during the second year of his labours in Burlington; and they resulted in the permanent establishment of Methodism in several places. So fully had he imbibed the itinerant spirit, that on his way to the Conference at Malta, in the spring of 1825, he took a circuit through Middlebury, Sandy Hill, Glenn's Falls, Amsterdam, Funda's Bush, and several other places, proclaiming a free, full, and present salvation in every place.

His next two years were spent upon the Charlotte Circuit, in Vermont. From this place he was removed, at the Conference of 1827, to the city of New-York. This appointment was unsought by him. So far from it, when he learned that such was the probable result, he ventured a request to the bishop to appoint him to some other portion of the work. And when the appointment had been made, he came to the city with many misgivings and with much fear. But he solaced himself with the reflection that the appointment was not of his own seeking; and, therefore, should he fail, on that ground he would be free from censure. The city of New-York then comprised one circuit with seven churches, and a membership of three thousand two hundred and eighty-nine persons. The churches were those now known as the John, Forsyth, Duane, Allen, Bedford, (then Greenwich Village,) Seventh, (then Bowery

Village,) and Willet-street Churches. Six preachers were stationed in the city. They circulated through the appointments in regular order, each preaching in the morning in one church, in another in the afternoon, and in a third in the evening; thus completing the circuit in a little over two weeks.

In this new field of labour the popular talent of Mr. Levings found ample room for exercise, and abundant stimulus to call it forth. His discourses were characterized rather by brilliancy than depth of thought, by apt and striking illustration rather than by strength of reasoning. The tenacity of his memory and the fluency of his speech were alike remarkable. He never wanted for words, and his superintendent on the circuit, "representing his case" before Conference, said, "Brother Levings was born with words on his tongue." The tones of his voice were well managed and pleasing; his gesture was appropriate and exceedingly graceful; his delivery was ardent, while at the same time his whole manner was self-possessed. These were precisely the qualities to render a man popular in New-York. Accordingly his congregations were crowded to excess. Numbers followed him from church to church, unwittingly, perhaps, violating the proprieties of the Christian Sabbath and of the worship of God in order to enjoy the eloquence of their favourite preacher. More than twenty years have passed away since that period, and yet I find many who still retain a vivid recollection of portions of his discourses, and of the effects produced upon the congregations by them. He has, during this period, been accused of catering to the religious enthusiasm of that class of excitable persons, whose manifestations of piety are apt to be more vociferous than practical. What foundation

for this charge his preaching at that day, when youthful enthusiasm was at its height, may have afforded, we will not undertake to say; or, indeed, how far his ardent zeal and his own high state of religious enjoyment may have superinduced these results, is a question we may not now profitably discuss. The purity of his Christian and ministerial character none have ever doubted; nor have any questioned but that the great ends of the gospel ministry were accomplished through his labours.

The manner in which he felt the responsibilities of his work, and the spirit that actuated him in its performance, may be best seen in the private journal of his labours and experience. In his record of September 7th, for this year, he says:—

“For some weeks past I have felt more than ever the importance of the work in which I am engaged. I trust that I am enabled to love God more than ever before. O that my heart may be filled with supreme love to Him who is my life and my salvation! Blessed be the Lord God, my heart seems more and more taken up in his work! I am far from believing that raptures are a sure evidence of deep piety. It is a good remark, that shallow water *ripples*, while that which is deep generally rolls on in silence and tranquillity. If I have my will subdued, my passions governed, and my affections sanctified and set on things above, then have I evidence of a deep and genuine work of grace. O Lord, search my heart and know me; see if there be any wicked way within me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

On another occasion, when he had completed his thirty-first year, he enters into the following train of reflections:—

“How swiftly do the years fly away! How soon will eternity be my everlasting home! How stands the account, let me inquire, between God and my soul? Wherein am I better than I was one year ago? Do I love God more than I did then? Have I a greater deadness to the world, or a greater conformity to Christ? Do I feel more the importance of the work in which I am engaged? I have much reason for repentance upon all these points; and yet in some respects I trust I am advancing in the divine life. Some of these questions I believe I can answer in the affirmative. But how slow my progress! I feel myself to be the weakest of the weak. O, for divine grace to help me! I have of late had some gracious intimations of the divine willingness to make my heart His constant home. O, when shall I experience all the fulness of God?”

Thus do we find this servant of God, in the full tide of his popularity, still yearning after holiness of heart; still panting for full redemption in the blood of Christ. Nothing could seduce him from his allegiance to the Saviour; nothing could unsettle him in his determined reliance upon Christ.

He had a buoyancy and elasticity of spirit that sometimes seemed to border upon lightness. This he felt to be a sore temptation. He says:—

“The Lord knows, and, to some extent, I know, that I have many imperfections, both as a Christian and a minister. I am naturally prone to be unguarded in speech; especially when in the company of Christians and ministers. By this I sometimes inadvertently offend against the generation of God’s children. This often wounds my heart and wrings it with sorrow. May God forgive and help me,

that I offend not in word ; for ‘the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.’”

We admire the watchfulness which thus led him to write bitter things against himself. But we have never known in him a breach of Christian courtesy to his brethren. And though possessed of a lively imagination, fine colloquial powers, and an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, making him a most interesting social companion, yet we must say, whatever may have been his faults in earlier life, that we have always found this exuberance chastened by the most sweet and lovely Christian spirit. The record of this temptation in his journal shows, that while panting for more holiness he did not cease to watch with a godly jealousy over himself.

During the fall of this year the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson sickened and died at the house of his friend, George Suckley, in the city of New-York. During his sickness it was the privilege of our brother to visit him, to be instructed by his counsel, and cheered by his resignation and by the triumphs of his faith. Under date of September 17th he says :—

“This morning I visited the venerable Freeborn Garrettson, who lies dangerously ill at the residence of George Suckley, Esq. He is faint, yet pursuing ; and I trust will make a good and glorious end, when called to lay down his body and his charge. He said, ‘I have given up my wife and daughter ; my treasure is in heaven.’ Then with uplifted hands he exclaimed, ‘I want to go home to Jesus. There is nothing below worth looking upon.’ And, addressing himself to me, he said, ‘Keep straight forward.’ straight forward.’ I then said, ‘Sir, you must feel at this time something like Simeon of old, having lived to see the

salvation of God these thirty or forty years in the rise and progress of Methodism in these United States.' But on my expressing some fear lest we, who are sons in the gospel, should suffer the work to decline from its original simplicity and purity, he instantly replied, 'You will *stand*, and do better than we have done.'"

Nine days later the good old patriarch departed to his rest. The dying scene, as well as the character and history of this old veteran of Methodism, seemed to make an ineffaceable impression upon the mind of the young preacher; and led him to long after the spirit of the old Methodist preachers, and to desire to imitate them in the entireness of their devotion and the abundance of their labours. Like Elisha, he prayed that the mantle of the departing man of God might fall upon him.

At the Conference of 1829, Mr. Levings was stationed in the city of Brooklyn. During this year his family was much afflicted with sickness; and one of his children, "little Charles Wesley," was taken from him. His feelings on the occasion are thus expressed:—

"Shall we receive good and not also evil at the hand of the Lord?

'Thankful I take the cup from thee,
Prepared and mingled by thy skill;
Though bitter to the taste it be,
Powerful the wounded soul to heal!'"

He was returned a second year to Brooklyn, and throughout the period of his stay laboured with efficiency and success. During this second year he accompanied John Garrison, Esq., on a pilgrimage to Salem, New-Jersey, to erect a monument over the grave of that distinguished and holy man of God, Benjamin Abbott. At the Conference of 1831 he was elected a delegate to the General Confer-

ence, and appointed to New-Haven. During his second year in New-Haven, the church in Fair Haven was erected through his agency. Finding an opening there to do good, he undertook to erect a small building for a prayer and lecture room; but the subscription soon became so large that he felt warranted in the erection of a church. In this enterprise, however, he was greatly afflicted by the opposition of some from whom he had looked for assistance and encouragement. This not only wounded his feelings, but in a measure crippled his energies. However, he went forward in the name of the Lord; and, being nobly sustained by one or two brethren, he carried the enterprise to so favourable an issue, that when the church had been completed, and was committed to a board of trustees, the debt upon it amounted to but one hundred and ninety dollars. Soon after, the society in that place was organized into an independent station, and have continued to maintain themselves as such until the present day.

His success in New-Haven was not such as to afford him much satisfaction; and he regarded his labours there with almost as much pain as pleasure. At their close, he was led to review the cause of this want of success. This he did with deep feeling and with much prayer. As his reflections may be applicable to other societies, and withal are suggestive of important considerations, we insert them in brief, premising that we have no reason to believe them to be more applicable to that particular society at the present day than to any other. The following he regarded as the prominent causes of the want of success and of prosperity in the society:—

“1. Want of greater zeal, piety, and faithfulness on the part of the preacher.”

“2. Divisions and party-spirit among the members of the Church.

“3. Want of union, brotherly love, and Christian forbearance among the official members.

“4. Neglect of the leaders in visiting the members of their respective classes.

“5. Neglect of, or an irregular attention to, the prayer-meetings by the official members.

“6. Disaffection among some (very few, I trust) to the institutions of the Church.”

One of the evidences of this disaffection on the part of certain persons, was the fact, that whatever was written and published by disaffected persons abroad, would soon find its way into their hands, and seem to find a ready response from their hearts; and by them be circulated among other members of the Church with great industry. Whatever assailed the Church seemed to be regarded by them with more interest than that which was written for its vindication.

These are great evils in a Church; and, wherever they exist to any extent, they furnish a powerful obstacle to its religious prosperity. They will neutralize the most devoted and self-sacrificing efforts of the Christian minister. He may preach with “the tongues of men and of angels;” but the word, to a great extent, must remain fruitless. The last cause mentioned might seem to indicate an undue and selfish jealousy on the part of the preacher. But we are bold to say, that whenever a restless dissatisfaction has crept into a society or Church, its members themselves are the main sufferers by it. Persons affected by this spirit, well-intentioned and pious as they may be, see everything in a wrong light. They may continue to adhere to the

Church; but their feelings are not cordial; their labours are not hearty, nor yet in faith. The hands of the minister and of the other members are weakened by them. Through them the Church has no unity, no strength, and no success. And then the very want of success becomes an occasion of more bitter complaint; and too often is regarded as confirmation strong of the justice of their prejudice and disaffection. Thus, as it is said of jealousy, the spirit they possess creates the food upon which it feeds and by which it is nourished. This is the natural result of disaffection in a Church; and sometimes it requires years of toil to repair the damage wrought in a few months. Nor are those societies few in number which have received shocks from which they never recovered.

Mr. Levings took but little part in the deliberations of the General Conference in 1832, being summoned home, on account of the sickness of his wife, soon after its commencement. The Troy Conference was this year organized, comprising the northern portion of the former New-York Conference. To accommodate the work, it became necessary to transfer him to this Conference the next year, and he was appointed to Garrettsen Station, Albany. At first he yielded a reluctant assent to the transfer—heeding the saying, *A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin*; but his reception was so cordial among the people, and God opened his way so graciously, that he soon felt the change to be in the order of Divine Providence.

He had been absent from this region six years, during which time he had filled three heavy and responsible appointments. His desire for mental improvement, and especially to enlarge the sphere of his theological knowledge,

continued unabated. Besides extended studies in the Evidences of Revealed Religion, and in Systematic Divinity, he had given considerable attention to Greek and Hebrew. But his progress in these latter studies was retarded by his necessary attention to pastoral and ministerial duties. He seemed to act upon the principle of Wesley: "Getting knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is a better." Not that he would pervert the maxim into an apology for the neglect of study; but in all his studies he would not forget that the grand object of them should be to make him more skilful and more successful in winning souls to Christ. And while he husbanded the fragments of his time for the acquisition of knowledge, he did not forget that the duties of the pastoral office had a paramount claim. During this period also he had repeated calls to dedicate churches, and to deliver missionary and Bible addresses. In these efforts he uniformly acquitted himself as a workman that needed not to be ashamed. Two of his dedication sermons were published, and are very creditable specimens of pulpit eloquence.

His labours in Albany were greatly blessed, and he returned a net increase of one hundred and six members to the next Conference. During the year he had also visited various places without the bounds of his charge, preaching the word of life with power and success. In 1834 he was stationed in Troy: thus, after sixteen years' absence from the society which raised him up, and from which he went forth to preach the word of life, he was returned to them as their pastor. In his weakness they had watched over him; they had counselled, encouraged, and prayed for him. While yet a stripling they had sent him forth into the vineyard of the Lord with their benedictions upon his head;

and now, in the maturity of his strength, he came back to repay their kindness, and to devote his energies to the building of them up in the Lord. To the people, though he had been absent so long, he seemed as one of themselves. They received him with joy, laboured with him in harmony, and, at the end of his two years, were parted from him with deep sorrow. He was a delegate to the General Conference of 1836, held in Cincinnati, and was distinguished no less by the amenity of his deportment, than by his judicious and conservative course in regard to the profoundly important and exciting subjects that came before that body.

At the ensuing Annual Conference he was stationed in Schenectady. The society here had just erected a new and beautiful church, and Methodism was assuming a position and an importance in the place that it had not previously had. Accordingly, in entering upon his charge, he felt that a great responsibility rested upon him. The character of Methodism in the place was to receive a new stamp, and the work of God a new impulse; its altered and improving circumstances required the development and right direction of new elements of moral power. Entering upon his work with these views and feelings, he prosecuted it with unwearied diligence and with great success. The congregation was greatly increased in numbers, and also improved in character. The membership of the Church rose from one hundred and ninety-one to three hundred and fifteen; and to his services Methodism is not a little indebted for its character and standing even at the present day.

During the two years spent in this place he dedicated seven churches, one of which was the Seventh-street Church

in New-York city. He also delivered a great number of special sermons, as well as missionary, Bible, and temperance addresses. The performance of so much labour abroad, while at the same time his flock were not neglected at home, shows that he was a man of untiring industry as well as of great activity. In the spring of 1837 he was called to dedicate a church in Hinesburgh, Vermont, under very interesting circumstances. Eleven years before, while on the Charlotte Circuit, he had formed a small society in that place; a weak and sickly plant, he hedged it around, and fostered it by his labours and his prayers, yet doubtful of its existence and growth. But, watered from on high, it had taken root, grown up, and become a vigorous tree. The little society had now erected a house in which to worship God; and he, who had been the apostle of God's grace to their souls, was called to perform the solemn service of consecration. The recollections of former seasons and of former toils were vividly awakened in his mind by this visit. Greatly did he rejoice to find that the bread cast abroad upon the waters had been gathered after many days, and that his work had not been in vain in the Lord.

While in Schenectady, Mr. Levings had the good fortune to become personally acquainted with Dr. Nott, President of Union College. In him he found a kind friend, and a judicious, able counsellor; and not unfrequently did the doctor assist him in his work. At the invitation of the president, Mr. Levings preached to the students in the college chapel, and his discourse was well received and highly spoken of. Indeed, so favourable was the impression made, that, subsequently, while stationed in Albany, he was invited to perform a similar service. The estimate of his

talents and acquirements formed by Dr. Nott, was afterward expressed in a very significant manner; as, on his recommendation, the college over which he presided conferred on Mr. Levings the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

For some cause or other, some of the society in Schenectady were very much opposed to the preacher appointed by the Conference to succeed him. Seeing only evil to the society, as well as to the preacher, in this opposition, his generous heart impelled him to throw himself between the people and preacher, and his fertile mind readily found a way to do it effectually. He reached home on Saturday, and, while the tones of discontent and dissatisfaction were heard all around him, he entered the pulpit the next day, (the preacher not having arrived,) and preached in the morning from: "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." Luke xix, 14. In the afternoon he took for his text: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. liii, 1. Those who have marked the fertility of his mind, the facility with which he adapted himself to circumstances, can well conceive how these two subjects were employed on this occasion. Suffice it to say, no murmur of discontent was afterward heard. The preacher was well received, laboured in harmony with the people, and the result of his first year's labour was a net increase of seventy-five members; and a year later the same society reported to the Conference a membership of four hundred and fifty, showing a net increase of one hundred and thirty-five in two years. How much better for the society than to run upon the rock on which so many societies have literally "split!" In the rejection of a minister, it is rarely the case that he is the

only sufferer ; often divisions and heart-burnings grow out of it, distrust is engendered, and years elapse before the Church recovers from the self-inflicted evil. We say "self-inflicted," because we have found that these objections often, if not generally, arise from unfounded prejudices or false views ; and, at best, a violent remedy will almost invariably prove to be a worse evil than that which it seeks to cure.

At the Conference of 1838 Mr. Levings was appointed presiding elder of Troy District. At the ensuing Conference, however, he was removed from the district, being succeeded by the Rev. T. Spicer, and appointed to the North Second-street charge in the city of Troy. On announcing the change to the Conference, the bishop paused in reading the appointments, and stated that he had not made this change, 1st. Because brother Levings had requested it ; for he had not. 2d. Nor because he considered him incompetent to the charge of the district. 3d. Nor because he had been unfaithful in discharging the duties of the district ; for in both these respects he had the fullest satisfaction from both preachers and people on the district. 4th. But the change was made because brother Levings was wanted for another field of labour. This change brought him again into the midst of a people to whom he was strongly attached, and by whom he was greatly beloved. Not only were they strongly devoted to him, but they fulfilled the divine injunction : "Love one another." They were united and faithful ; and the year was one of signal blessings—the return made to Conference showing a net increase of one hundred and twenty members.

From this station he was transferred, at the Conference

of 1840, to Division-street, Albany, where he spent the two succeeding years. During the summer of this first year he was greatly afflicted with the loss of a much-loved daughter. She died after an illness of only a few days, aged a little over five years. He had lost other children, but this was emphatically the child of his heart ; and to part with her, he says, "was one of the severest trials of his life." For some months previous to her death, she had frequently spoken of dying and going to be with her Saviour, and with her little twin sister who had died when but a little more than a year old. She often sang, with apparently deep feeling, the verse commencing,—

"What is this that steals upon my frame?
Is it death, is it death?"

Thus exhibiting a maturity of intellect and of faith, uncommon at so early an age, the little sufferer passed sweetly away to her rest. From very childhood she had been the *companion* and *friend* of her father, an angel of love hovering around him, a sunbeam from heaven shining upon his path. Painful was the visitation, deeply was he chastened ; but salutary did he feel the discipline to be.

From Albany he was removed to Troy, and again stationed in the State-street Church. At the close of this year, it was generally desired by the preachers, and also by many of the people, that Mr. Levings should again be returned to the district. To this, however, he had insuperable objections, founded not upon considerations of personal expediency, but upon principle. This, combined with other circumstances, induced him to ask a transfer to the New-York Conference, which request was granted, and he was again appointed to New-York city, to labour in the Vestry-

street charge. The cordial welcome he received on his first arrival, and the tokens of continued affection from his people, were the source of peculiar satisfaction to him, and greatly encouraged him in his work.

At the General Conference of 1844, the Rev. E. S. Janes, who for several years had filled, with distinguished ability, the office of Financial Secretary of the American Bible Society, was elected a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the June following, Dr. Levings was elected to the office made vacant by Mr. Janes's resignation. The Church with whom he had been labouring but one year being strongly attached to him, and quite unwilling to give him up, he was continued in the charge another year. He had, therefore, during the year to perform, as best he could, the duties both of his pastoral work and his secretaryship. It was a year of great labour. A man of less activity and endurance, or of less flexible mind, would have found himself inadequate to the task. In addition to his home labours, he visited, during the year, four or five Annual Conferences, presenting before them the claims of the Bible cause; and delivered over thirty Bible addresses before various societies in different parts of the country. Notwithstanding these extra efforts, he continued to labour with great acceptability and success in his pastoral charge; and when the term of his service closed in Vestry-street, he made a grateful record of God's mercy in sustaining him, and in giving him favour among the people, and success in his ministry.

Being now released from his charge, he devoted himself entirely to the duties of his office, and to the interests of the American Bible Society. Of his travels and labours for three succeeding years we have no authentic and definite

account, aside from the minute of the places, times, and subjects of his discourses. No entry was made in his diary subsequently to the closing of his pastoral relation with the Vestry-street people. It is, however, generally known that he devoted himself with unceasing assiduity to promote the interests of the Bible cause. He performed long and toilsome journeys, visiting almost every section of the country, and presenting the claims of the society before ecclesiastical bodies, and addressing numerous local auxiliaries. At the same time also a burden of correspondence, relating to local agencies and the financial operations of the society, rested upon him.

During the fall of 1847, while on an extensive tour through the Western and South-western States, he contracted a dysentery from the use of the water on the western rivers. He reached home very much enfeebled in health, and for two or three months was unable to resume his labours. Indeed, for the most of that time he was confined to his house and bed; and, during some part of it, it was doubtful whether he would ever be restored again to health. God, however, graciously raised him up; and he was again permitted to go forth to labour in his Master's vineyard. During this sickness, the writer of this sketch repeatedly visited him. The seasons of conversation and of prayer enjoyed at this time will long be remembered. He possessed the same buoyancy of spirit and sprightliness that ever characterized him; nor had his fund of amusing and instructive anecdote failed. He was indeed *himself*; but he exhibited a maturity of faith and a depth of piety that seemed to augur a speedy termination of his earthly pilgrimage. His constitution never recovered fully its former vigour; but he was able still to discharge the duties

of his office with efficiency through the spring and summer of 1848.

In the fall of that year the interests of the Bible Society demanded of him another tour through the South-western States. He left home with much reluctance, and under great depression of spirits, having, and expressing, a deep presentiment of evil. Yet with his usual vigour he prosecuted his work; during the months of October and November he travelled nearly four thousand miles, visiting the Tennessee, Memphis, and Mississippi Conferences, preaching eighteen sermons, and delivering nine addresses. He was subject to much inconvenience on some parts of his route, owing to the rainy weather and the bad condition of the roads. On one route he spent three days and three nights in a stage, travelling over roads almost impassable. The last night two of the wheels sunk up to the hub in the mire, and the coach was nearly overturned. There were nine grown persons and two children inside, who were obliged to get out and stand upon the ground, while the rain was pouring down upon them, till the driver had unharnessed one of the horses and ridden half a mile to obtain a gang of negroes to pry up the carriage. This occupied nearly two hours. Under such exposures his health began to fail during the latter part of November. But he persevered in his mission till the 24th of December, when he preached in the Presbyterian Church in Natchez. This was his last public discourse.

On the succeeding day he wrote a letter to his family in New-York. This letter is full of tenderness and affection. He tells them that he felt it would be wrong longer to withhold from them the fact that he was in a very feeble state of health. In addition to other diseases which had hung

about him, he had been subject to several severe attacks of asthma, involving sympathetically, if not organically, the action of the heart. His nightly rest was broken and disturbed, and he was reduced to a great degree of bodily weakness. He had purposed visiting the Louisiana Conference, but his health would permit him to proceed no farther. He now only thought of reaching his home, and had many misgivings whether he should ever accomplish that. The most expeditious and safe route homeward was by the way of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers; and even this route was not at this time without its difficulties. The cholera was raging in New-Orleans with great violence, and every boat that came up numbered a catalogue of victims on the passage. Those who died by day were secretly carried on shore in the night, and roughly entombed in the bank of the river. Nor could the sick and dying expect much attention or care; and, indeed, the cold and damp state-rooms of the boats furnished but poor accommodations for the sick in any case.

With him, however, there seemed no alternative; and on the 29th of December he took passage on the steamboat Memphis for Cincinnati. The boat was six days on her passage; she was crowded with passengers, and many were sick and dying with the cholera. His sufferings on the voyage were greatly alleviated, and his mind comforted, by the kind attentions of a Christian brother, Mr. Elisha Payne, of Madison, Indiana. He also received medical advice and assistance from a Dr. Sale, who happened to be a passenger on the boat. It was indeed a gloomy passage, and he frequently expressed the apprehension that he would never live to reach his home. This was an object dear to his heart; and his highest earthly wish seemed to be that

he might die in the bosom of his family. However, he was calm and resigned; and, for the most part, retained his accustomed cheerfulness and buoyancy of spirit.

At length he reached Cincinnati; and, at the house of his devoted friends, brother and sister Burton, he found a welcome home. Ten years before he had been their pastor in the east; he had united them in the sacred bonds of matrimony; he had been their friend and counsellor in times of affliction and trial. Their hearts, as well as their house, were now open to receive him. Like ministering angels they hovered around him in his last earthly affliction. Sweet and yet mournful was the task of our brother and sister; they performed the last sad offices due to departing worth; they ministered to his last earthly want, listened with inexpressible sorrow to his last farewell, closed his dying eyes, and forsook him not till his dust had been gathered to its kindred dust. O, there are green spots upon our earth, where human affection and sympathy shine forth with heavenly lustre! Priceless is their value! It is grateful to record them. The Rev. Mr. Strickland, one of the agents of the American Bible Society, was also with him night and day; and a numerous circle of friends rejoiced in the opportunity to minister to him in his affliction.

His sufferings were great, but in the midst of them all he enjoyed perfect peace; and signal was his triumph, through grace, in the last conflict. When he found that the great object of earthly desire—to see his family once more in the flesh and to die among his kindred—could not be realized, he only exclaimed, “The will of the Lord be done.” On the Sabbath evening preceding his death, being asked if he realized strong faith in Christ, he replied,

“O yes, the Lord Jesus Christ is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. I die in the faith of the gospel.” On one occasion, when he was sitting up, brother Burton placed a large Bible to support his head, that he might breathe more easily. Observing the letters upon the back, he exclaimed, “Thou blessed book, lamp to my feet and light to my path; thou guide of my youth, directory of my manhood, and support of my declining years; how cheerless would this world be, were it not for thy divine revelations and Christian experience!” After his will had been signed, he said, “Thank God, one foot is in Jordan, and I shall soon cross over.” When Bishop Morris reached the city, and hastened to the bedside of his dying friend, he said to him, “Thank God that I am permitted to see your face once more. I am not able to converse much, but I can still say, ‘Glory to God.’” The bishop inquired if he had any message to send to his brethren of the New-York Conference. “Tell them,” said he, “I die in Christ; I die in the hope of the gospel. Tell them I have a firm, unshaken confidence in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the foundation, and *only foundation*, of my hope of eternal life; and, relying upon that foundation, all before me is light, and joyful, and glorious.” In him was most gloriously realized the sentiment of the great apostle: *To live is Christ, but to die is gain*. With a firm faith in his Redeemer, and an unclouded view of heaven, he passed in peace and triumph to his everlasting reward. The last words he uttered were on the occasion of Mr. Burton’s children being presented to receive his dying blessing. Taking each by the hand, he said, “God bless the dear children, and make them holy.”

Between nine and ten o’clock on the evening of the 9th

of January, surrounded by sympathizing, praying Christian friends, he expired. On the following Thursday his funeral was attended by a large concourse of people, embracing many of the clergy in Cincinnati and its vicinity. And, after an impressive sermon by Bishop Morris, his remains were deposited in the city cemetery; but subsequently removed to the Wesleyan Cemetery, where the Young Men's Bible Society of Cincinnati propose to erect a suitable monument to his memory. Subsequently, a funeral discourse was delivered by Bishop Morris before the New-York Conference, and was requested for publication by that body. The preachers' meetings in Cincinnati and New-York, the Board of Managers of the Young Men's Bible Society of Cincinnati, and also that of the American Bible Society, and various other associations, passed resolutions expressive of their high estimate of his character and worth.

Few men have been more generally beloved within the sphere of their labours, and few have been more sincerely lamented in their death, than Dr. Levings. His manner was affable and winning; his heart was warm and generous; his mind, naturally fertile and lively, and stored with an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, coupled with a retentive and ready memory, a brilliant imagination, a striking aptness at comparison, and fine colloquial powers, made him a most delightful companion in social life. If these peculiarities of character, strongly marked in him, sometimes made him appear more light and jocular than was befitting the ministerial office, and especially to age and superior standing in it, there were at least redeeming considerations to be found in the artlessness and sincerity of his piety, and the sacred veneration in which he ever held

divine things. He was an almost universal favourite among his brethren in the ministry. And few ministers have left behind them, in the congregations where they have ministered, a larger number of strongly attached personal friends.

The cast of his mind, it would be inferred from what has already been said, was not that which grapples with profound truths and evolves mighty thoughts; but rather that which would take the popular and practical view of things. His reasonings generally were of this tone and character; and yet his sermons were well digested, and presented clear and forcible exhibitions of divine truth. His performances were almost exclusively extemporaneous; he rarely committed more than a very brief skeleton to paper. His mind, however, was a storehouse of facts and illustrations, and also clear in its perceptions, and tenacious in its retention of truth. His tongue was like the "pen of a ready writer;" and he was never at a loss for appropriate language in which to give utterance to his thoughts. He combined, in an unusual degree, close argumentation with apt and striking illustration and an animated and attractive delivery. His personal appearance was such as would naturally make a very good impression, his manner was self-possessed, the intonations of his voice well managed, and his gesture easy and appropriate. His preaching exhibited none of those overwhelming strokes of eloquence which mark the oratory of some distinguished men; but, when his energies were aroused and called into action, his discourses everywhere sparkled with the richest gems. Indeed, few could hear him at any time without being pleased, instructed, and even powerfully impressed. But the highest honour placed upon his ministry was the emi-

ment success with which God crowned it, in making him the instrument of turning multitudes from darkness to light, and from the power of sin to the service of God.

Such was the man whose history and character are but inadequately sketched in this paper. He has now ceased from his labours and gone to his reward. Multitudes had been blessed by his ministry; some of whom—dear in his memory—had before him entered into rest. Did they not welcome him to the partnership of their joys on high? He has gone to rejoin them, gone to behold again the loved Martha Ann,—“child of his heart,”—whose sweet spirit passed away with the summer flowers of 1840. He died as the Christian minister might wish to die—mature in the graces of the Spirit, fresh from the battle-fields of the cross. Those who had been blessed by his ministry accompanied him with prayers and tears down to the brink of Jordan; those who had gone before, joyfully welcomed him over. Thus, in the maturity of his strength and in the height of his usefulness, a brother has been called away, a standard-bearer in Israel has fallen.

He was licensed to preach on the 20th day of December, 1817, and died on the 9th of January, 1849; consequently, he sustained the ministerial office a little more than thirty years. During that time he officiated in eighteen different appointments; preached nearly four thousand sermons; dedicated thirty-eight churches; delivered sixty-five miscellaneous addresses; and, finally, travelled thirty-six thousand five hundred and thirty-nine miles, and delivered two hundred and seventy-three addresses in behalf of the American Bible Society. But the best of all was, his life and ministry were crowned with the divine blessings, and his dying moments with the divine glory.





Engraved by J. F. Traubner

AMERICAN OILMAN, D.D.

President of the American Oilman

See an engraving of this portrait by the artist

Stephen Olin.

AT home in his father's house,—sick, feverish, and restless,—lies the successful candidate for the highest honour of his *Alma Mater*. Esteemed by his instructors, beloved by his associates, and envied, he has won the prize fairly and honestly. No one questions the righteousness of the verdict which assigns the *valedictory* to STEPHEN OLIN. But it is not for him, and another receives the plaudits of the assembled multitude, while he lies there taking the first slow draught from the bitter cup of disappointment, pressed so frequently to his lips in after years.

With an iron constitution, and an indomitable strength of will, he had disregarded the admonitions of those who watched over him, allowed himself little respite from his books, and, grudgingly, very short seasons of relaxation. Thus he reached the object of his ambition, while sowing insensibly the seeds of suffering. In his stalwart frame they have already taken deep root, and are not to be eradicated until that corruptible shall have put on incorruption.

One more warning for the youthful student—an additional beacon to be crowded in upon the highway of literature! It might have been otherwise? Certainly. There are maxims in the theory of education which, observed, conduce to the health of the body, and to physical strength,

no less certainly than their neglect tends to disease, and pain, and a premature grave. We can imagine him to have secured his object without the loss of health ; to have poured forth in that coveted valedictory a flood of eloquence which should very nearly have satisfied himself, and more than justified the expectations of those who even then predicted for him a large share of political honours and emoluments. And what then? Truly there is no answer to that question. In any event, and under any circumstances, Stephen Olin would have been a great man ; and it is possible that from that hour, wafted by the breath of popular applause, and intoxicated with its incense, his career might have been onward, until he had almost gratified that boundless ambition which, in his own words, "would have bartered a seat in heaven for a seat in Congress."

And he might have had a seat in Congress. In the language of one of his classmates, "Had he been blessed with health, few men would have been his superiors. His name would have added new lustre to the splendid catalogue of Edwards, Marshall, Dwight, Calhoun, and Webster, and would have obtained a high place in the scroll of fame." But Christ had more important work for the ambitious student, and in store for him something better and more glorious than his own hopes had pictured, or his admiring friends foretold. He was even then showing him how great things he must suffer for His name's sake ; giving him there upon his sick couch to feel the vanity of his aspirations,—his first lesson in that science which estimates all things at their true value, and by diligence in which the names of its disciples are written, not on the scroll of fame, but "high up" in the book of life.

At his entrance upon his collegiate course he was sciep-

tical on the subject of Christianity, and so he continued until near its close. He was not indeed an open and avowed infidel, nor was he guilty of gross immoralities; but he was sarcastic and keenly witty on the subject of experimental religion. He loved to laugh at the imperfections of professing Christians. His laughter was contagious, his facetiousness irresistible; and it was remarked that his was the only class that passed through college without the conversion of some one of its members. The books which he read, either as a prescribed duty, or for mental relaxation, tended to confirm his scepticism, until, in his senior year, the graceful rhetoric of Paley, and the stern logic of Butler, took captive his powerful intellect, and compelled him to admit the truth of revealed religion. But his heart was unaffected. "I knew," says he, "that I could not prove, and that nobody had proved the Bible false, or that there is no hell; but I had deliberately made up my mind that I never would trouble myself about it."

And but for that sickness, in all human probability, his mind would have continued thus "made up." There, he not only had leisure for reflection, but was compelled to think. His plans for the future were all deranged; and, although he did not share in the fears of those who watched around him that he was about to die, yet were his thoughts turned upon the grave, and the unknown realms beyond it. At length the crisis was passed; and with health somewhat restored, but with a troubled spirit, in opposition to the wishes of his father he left his home, journeyed toward a more genial clime, and took charge of a newly-established seminary in a sparse settlement in the interior of South Carolina.

"Does the new teacher open the school with prayer?"

A startling question. It was asked by the parent of one of his pupils, at a house where the teacher was boarding, and overheard by him as he sat reading in an adjoining room. To open the school with prayer! He had not thought of that as a part of the duty expected from him. How could he pray? Owing to a peculiar theory of his mother's, he had never been taught to repeat even those blessed words prescribed by the Lord Jesus. She was a woman of unquestioned piety, and a member of a Christian Church; but her creed taught that none but the regenerated might approach the throne of grace. How could he pray? And yet he felt the expectation to be reasonable and right on the part of those who had committed to his guardianship the destiny of their little ones. After a severe struggle between duty and inclination, he resolved to meet their wishes. He composed and committed to memory a form of words which, after reading a chapter from the Bible, he repeated, day after day, in the hearing of his scholars.

A more direct and more disquieting question troubled him soon afterward. He was at a little prayer-meeting in the house of a Methodist local minister, where, after others had engaged in calling upon God, it was asked in a gentle whisper, "Will the teacher please to pray with us?" Had a thunderbolt fallen at his feet it might have startled him more, but would not have affected him so powerfully, nor made so deep and lasting an impression. It was like the still small voice heard by the prophet, when the wind, and the earthquake, and the fire had passed away, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" And he, fresh from the land of the pilgrims, the educated New-Englander who had come among this simple-hearted people to train the minds of the young immortals committed trustingly to his charge,

with his one stale stereotyped form of words, what did *he* there—*there* among that little company, met in the great Master's name to pray?

Of course he declined the invitation; but the still small voice followed him, and he had no rest day nor night. The arrows of the Almighty were within him, the poison whereof drank up his spirit. For weeks he continued in agony bordering upon despair. Under the shade of a large tree, which is still pointed out as Olin's Bethel, the strong man humbled himself as a little child, and day after day with cries and tears wrestled with the God of Jacob, and—HE blest him there. The transition was instantaneous, like the flashing glory of the noon-day sun upon the darkness of midnight. Old things had passed away—behold, all things had become new.

The following is his own simple and touching statement, as given in a letter to one of his friends:—

“I used to begin each day with prayer in my school; and as this was an exercise to which I was pretty much unaccustomed, I often practised in the woods, to acquire a propriety of tone and expression. After a little time, I came to believe myself as sincere as anybody else; I even professed myself a Christian. During two or three months of this sort of life, every day increased my stupidity and my guilt. All at once, without any visible means, my callous heart was smitten with such compunction and agony as I cannot describe. I felt the hand of God upon me. Sometimes in despair, and always wretched, my nights were passed in tears and prayers. I dared not discontinue my religious exercises in school, and in them my feelings often rose too high to be concealed. Yet my pride, and the peculiar circumstances in which I was placed by

my false pretensions to piety, would not permit me to disclose the state of my feelings. I groaned, and prayed, and wept alone. It was on the 20th of September (1821) that the blessed Jesus poured the oil and the wine into my wounded spirit. It was a glorious moment—a happy moment! I passed from hell to paradise. I was filled with speechless exultation, and a considerable time elapsed before I could believe that I was in my right mind. Blessed be God! I still feel the sacred flame glowing within me. Cherish it, O thou Source of everything good and perfect, till the sin of my heart be consumed, and, a brand plucked from the burning, my voice shall join with those who cease not to ascribe glory and dominion to the Lamb that was slain!”

From that hour all thoughts of worldly greatness died within him. In his own words, he was “cured of that overweening, damning ambition which had blinded his eyes, and brought him to the brink of ruin.” The political arena, the legislative hall, the ermine of the judiciary faded from his vision, and his eye was fixed upon that central glory of the universe—the cross of Christ. In pondering the question, To what branch of the Church shall I attach myself? he asked not, Where shall I meet the most refined associates, or how may I journey most gracefully through this wilderness? “I joined the Methodist Church,” he says, “because I believed their doctrines were those of the Bible, their practice truly Christian. I, however, carried with me strong prejudices against some of their peculiarities, and determined, as soon as I could have access to an Episcopal Church, to become a member of it, as, on the whole, more congenial, in principle and practice, with my feelings and opinions. I was led, however, to examine the matter

seriously and conscientiously, and this examination has resulted in a full determination to remain in the Methodist Church. I believe them to be a more humble and a more holy people. * * * I am sure I can be more useful among them, and an instrument, I hope, of getting more souls to heaven. This, with me, decides the matter. The humiliations, the labours, the poverty, the reproaches, do not terrify me."

Having settled this question, he never faltered in his attachment, but devoted himself with a zeal that never wearied, and a love that never grew cold, to promote the best interests of the Church of his choice. Not that he became a bigot, or allowed himself to be blinded by the subtle dust of sectarian prejudice. He was, during his whole life, a model of large-hearted catholicity, and was frank in the declaration of the sentiment that "the sorest evil which presses upon the American Churches—the chiefest obstacle to their real prosperity in holiness and usefulness—is the spirit of sectarianism."

"Bigotry," he says, on another occasion, "is, in my deliberate opinion, one of the chief obstacles in the way of the gospel—one of the devil's main engines to carry forward his warfare against the kingdom of God. From the depths of my soul, I loathe the miserable sectarianism, by whatever name called, which keeps Christ's disciples at variance! I would abandon my own denomination without hesitancy if it refused to recognise others as true Churches and true ministers of Christ."

But while he avowed his hostility to that spirit, and denounced it on all proper occasions, he had little sympathy for the men who know nothing of that endearing intimacy, that heart-communion, by which the faithful of every

denomination are linked together; and by which they are impelled, not to love others less, but their own more. He prized the peculiarities which distinguished the people of his own communion, and was ever ready to uphold and defend them, while at the same time he saw the excellences of others, and gave them all due honour. But he, especially if he were a minister, who, under any specious pretext, forsook his own fold for another,—the renegade,—was ever an object of his utter contempt, mingled indeed with pity, when, in the judgment of charity, such an emotion might be deemed justifiable.

As is almost universally the case with the young convert, his first desire, after he found his own feet placed upon the Rock, was to make known to his relatives and friends how great things the Lord had done for him, and invite them to a participation of the same blessedness. Some of the letters which he addressed at this time to those near his heart are models of faithful earnestness and eloquent entreaty. Among those to whom he thus wrote were two young men who had been his fellow-students, and who, he had reason to suppose, had been hardened in a course of sin by his own example at college; and it is remarkable that both of them soon after embraced the Saviour and became preachers of the gospel—the one in the Protestant Episcopal, the other in the Congregational Church. The latter gentleman, in relating the circumstance, says: “It was a most faithful letter—a model of Christian fidelity and friendship, and truly characteristic of the nobleness of his spirit. It is worth vastly more than anything I can write respecting him. That it had a great influence in producing a change in myself is certain.”

It is not wonderful, therefore, that in after years he who had been by God's blessing so successful in the first efforts of his religious letter-writing, should have dwelt frequently upon the good effects likely to result from thus following the dictates of the Spirit, and that he should have urged the performance of the duty in his own impressive style. Beautifully and truthfully he says, and the sentiment, as we have seen, was founded upon his own experience:—"The glow and outbursting joyous gratitude of the new-born soul, the fervours of his first love, the fresh lustre of his beautiful garments, become potent agencies for good, and no more pleasant incense than his ever rises up to heaven."

Very soon after uniting with the Church he was invited occasionally by one of the itinerant ministers to go with him to his appointments on the Sabbath, and to close the service by exhortation and prayer. His exercises of this kind were, from the first, strikingly impressive, and the young exhorter was soon licensed, according to the forms of the Church, to preach the gospel. His first regular sermon, although, in fact, his exhortations had all been sermons, was delivered at a quarterly meeting in the neighbourhood of his school-room, and gave bright promise of what the Church might expect from one so gifted and so entirely bent upon doing his Master's will. It was luminous, energetic, and, at times, overwhelming. "Never in the memory of the oldest Methodists had so powerful a preacher burst with so sudden a splendour and tremendous an effect upon the Church." Such is the recorded testimony of his earliest sermons, and thus he continued until the end,—sparing not himself in the pulpit even when debilitated by disease, and when fully conscious that the

effort would be succeeded by weeks and perhaps months of prostration and suffering. The love of Christ constrained him, and although before entering the pulpit he agreed fully with the advice of friends, and resolved to be prudent and moderate, yet, when there, he appeared to be borne onward with the resistless tide of his own feelings, swelled as it always was by the visible and sometimes audible emotions of his hearers, and prudence was forgotten and self lost sight of.

And thus we have indicated one element of the power by which he swayed so majestically the multitudes who listened spell-bound to his eloquence. In addition to this apparently utter forgetfulness of self, there was also an absolute dependence upon the promised aid of the Holy Spirit and faith in lively exercise. It was a solemn thing to be in the pulpit with him when, before commencing the service, he knelt and wrestled, with head upturned and outstretched arms, as if seeing the Invisible, and then rose with a sunny smile upon his countenance which evinced that he had prevailed with God.

His style, manner, and action were everywhere, and especially in the pulpit, peculiarly his own, unique in fact, formed after no model, and certainly at variance with the prescribed rules of oratory and homiletics. Measured by those rules and tested by such standards there was much to find fault with, and many things that might have been different; but who would have had them altered? Ere the head could have thus decided, the heart, taken captive, decreed that it was all as it should be. His gestures were not graceful, yet were they never inappropriate, and at times a grammatical error would escape him, a solecism, or a word pronounced not according to the arbitrary

standard of the most recent lexicographer. But who ever thought of the application of mere rhetorical rules while listening to his impassioned tones, and receiving into his soul those masses of hallowed truth which he hewed out with a giant's power, and threw among his hearers with an apparently inexhaustible prodigality?

He carried no notes with him into the pulpit, where it was his wont, after announcing his text, to close the Bible, and, without announcing formally the divisions of his subject, to explain it with simplicity, and thence onward to the close with increasing energy and accelerating power to enforce it by argument and apt illustration. But his discourses were all perfectly systematic, thoroughly digested, well-studied. Few men were more careful in their preparations. The oil which he brought into the sanctuary was *beaten* oil. He prepared himself as if he expected no aid from the Holy Spirit, and threw himself upon the promises as if no preparation had been made. On this point he practically exemplified his own precepts, urging, as he did, upon every young minister with whom he had influence, the indispensable necessity of diligent study and the most careful preparation. He saw and felt the importance of theological schools, and, at a time when it was not popular to do so, he advocated their establishment and their claims to the patronage of the ministry and laity of his own denomination. Writing to a brother clergyman who had asked his opinion upon the subject, he gave it frankly. "It is," said he, "that such institutions are not only desirable but indispensable. We got along passably well," he continues, "when other denominations were wasting their strength in attempting to explain and inculcate the blind mysteries of Calvinism; but now, when they unite great

learning and zeal to as much Arminianism as gives them access to the popular mind, *we must educate our ministry better or sink.*" Adverting to the popular objection that the mission of the Methodists is especially to the unlearned and the indigent, he says, "We may boast of preaching to the poor, but without the due intermixture of the rich and influential we cannot fulfil our destiny as a Church. Nothing can save us but an able ministry, and this cannot be had but by thorough education." This was his unwavering conviction upon a subject with which at times he was, in his own language, "full to overflowing and to agony."

His sermons usually occupied two hours, and frequently more, in their delivery, yet could it not be said that he violated the injunction of the Discipline, "Do not preach too long," for he held the attention of his hearers to the end, and the time passed so imperceptibly that only by turning their eyes to the clock did they become aware of its flight. A sermon delivered by him on the last night of the year 1845, in the church in Madison-street, New-York, the pulpit of which he had occupied on the three preceding Sunday mornings, was one of his greatest efforts, and in its effects most overwhelming. It was a watch-night, the first and the only time he preached on a similar occasion. It had been intended that the pastor of the church should follow the discourse with an exhortation, and the last hour of the year was to be spent in prayer. The service commenced at eight o'clock, and the preliminary exercises occupied twenty-five or thirty minutes, when he arose and announced his text. It was Ephesians iv, 30, and a meagre outline of the sermon is found in his published works. For the first hour he dwelt mainly, in a

didactic style, upon the peculiar offices and work of the Holy Spirit, and upon the duty of Christians with reference to His operations upon the heart. Thus far his course had been like that of a majestic river, widening and deepening in its onward course. During the second hour the solemn stillness of the vast assembly attested the presence of that celestial Agent who was the theme of the discourse, and the speaker, evidently baptized afresh, poured forth an irresistible tide of expostulation and entreaty which appeared to subdue every spirit and to take captive every will. The stillness and the solemnity increased; and during the momentary pauses of the preacher you might hear the beatings of your own heart amid the half-stifled sobs of those around you, and read in their tearful eyes a resolution like your own, then and there to commence a new life. And now he had brought us within the last hour of the departing year, and as he depicted the dreadful state of him who had grieved the Holy Spirit for the last time, when hope had fled and mercy shrieked farewell, an unutterable horror fell upon the hearts of his hearers, whence arose a responsive echo to the prayer with which he closed—"Take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

When he sat down there remained but time for a few minutes of silent devotion, in which the congregation joined, and then the New Year was ushered in. It did seem on that occasion as if there was no hyperbole in the sentiment of one who tells us that he felt as if "Olin could convert anybody; and that once fastened within the sound of his voice, conviction and conversion were inevitable." Those who heard that sermon could well understand how it was that no less than thirteen persons found peace in believing while listening to his voice at a camp-meeting, and

that in the earlier stages of his ministry scores frequently rushed to the altar for prayers, after one of his discourses, without waiting for an invitation.

His sermons were totally devoid of anything like the trickery of oratory. There was no affectation, no clap-trap. He never told stories in the pulpit. He reasoned with his hearers, and his reasoning was clear and conclusive, cumbered at times with a superfluity of verbiage, and overloaded with the gorgeous drapery of his rhetoric. But he introduced no ornaments for their own sake, and in the minds of his hearers there never arose a suspicion that the speaker was seeking, for himself or for his most elaborate discourses, so paltry a thing as their admiration. He sought to win their hearts for his Master, keeping himself in the background and ever making prominent Christ and his cross. The exuberance of his style and the affluence of his diction indicated the exhaustless riches of grace in the treasury of his soul, and the overwhelming tide of his eloquence seemed to flow necessarily from the depth of the well-spring of living waters within him.

His illustrations were drawn mainly from the Bible, and circumstances and events in the historical parts of the Old Testament were frequently brought forward with great beauty, and always with wonderful pertinency. His descriptive powers were of the highest order, and his pictures, if we may so call them, were drawn so vividly, were so striking and so truthful, that they left an almost indelible impression upon the mind. The conclusion of his watch-night sermon, to which we have adverted, may be taken as an illustration; and another, equally striking, although not so dreadful, for that was terrible almost beyond endurance, was given before the Genesee Conference, during its ses-

sion at Vienna, N. Y., in September, 1844. His congregation, amounting, as was estimated, to above five thousand, were ranged before him in a beautiful grove. The time, the afternoon of a lovely Sabbath, as the shades of evening were drawing on; his hearers, among whom were two hundred Methodist preachers; the serenity of the scene, its sacred stillness, and the certainty that he should never again address that assembly, all conspired to stir the great fountain of his soul to its utmost depths; and for two hours and a half that immense throng hung upon the speaker's lips in rapt silence, broken occasionally by a responsive amen or an involuntary hallelujah. Toward the close of his discourse he described a party of pleasure. They were in a boat upon the bosom of a beautiful and placid river. There was music and dancing. The merry song went round, and the wine-cup. Gaily and gallantly they were borne onward; and now, O God! they are within the rapids; but they heed not, hear not the cry of warning from the banks of the river, and are fast approaching a point where it will be beyond the power of earth and Heaven combined to save them. A little further—a little further, and the precipice will be reached, and the hoarse cataract will chant their melancholy, ceaseless, unavailing requiem. Turning then to the preachers who sat around him, with outstretched arms and tearful eyes, and in a voice almost suffocated with emotion, he cried, "It is for you, brethren, to rouse these infatuated voyagers from their maddening dream; to spare no effort, to shun no cross, if perchance, by God's blessing, you may stop them, and rescue them, and save them, ere they reach the verge of that tremendous precipice from the base of which, if they take the fearful plunge, the smoke of their torment will ascend forever and ever."

We profess not to give the precise language of the speaker, for, as the editor of a religious paper who was present remarked, one might as well attempt to report the thunders of Niagara or the blast of a hurricane; but we have given the sentiment, and must leave to the reader's imagination the effect produced. In a letter to a young friend he thus speaks of the sermon referred to: "Last Sunday I preached to the Genesee Conference—a body of nearly two hundred ministers. It was a season of the presence of God, and will long be remembered by many who were present. I was enabled to say plain things, and the hearts of the people were open. I love such seasons. They are eras in my past life on which I look back and thank God. In nothing do I so exult as in this work of the ministry—this holding up Christ as the one object of faith, and love, and admiration. I have often thought that I would willingly spend six days of every week in a cell, on a sick bed, if on the seventh I might be allowed to preach Christ crucified. It is not merely a duty, and, so, grateful to the conscience in the discharge of it; it is always a joyful season, a feast to my own feelings. And yet I am not likely to do much of this work."

A melancholy sentence that last, coming though it did from a heart subdued, and chastened, and submissive. "Not likely to do much of a work" in which his soul found its chiefest joy, which he did so faithfully and so well, and for the privilege of doing which he would gladly have endured privation and suffering! Truly this was a fathomless mystery, one of the strangest things in the providential dealings of the infinitely wise God, that he who by his gifts and graces might have done so much was permitted to do so little, to preach so seldom. It frequently tempted the

soul that longed for the prosperity of Zion to say unto the great Head of the Church, What doest thou? Truly His thoughts are not as our thoughts; and the example of the sick man, silent upon his couch of suffering, joyously listening to what others were permitted to do for the promotion of God's glory, or for it offering praises to his name, while it subdued the spirit, prompting the utterance of the Saviour's language, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," did but postpone the solution of the mystery until the hour when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly.

A few months of actual service as a pastor in the city of Charleston were all that the Church was permitted to enjoy in this relation. Then followed a season of suffering, journeyings in quest of health, a little respite, the duties of a professor's chair, entered upon with bright anticipations and prosecuted with diligence, and then the sick-bed again; "an old man; a broken reed at twenty-seven!" And thus it was all through the years of his pilgrimage. As professor of rhetoric in Franklin College at Athens in Georgia, as President of Randolph Macon in Virginia, and of the Wesleyan University at Middletown in Connecticut, he had occasional seasons of renovated health, when he was permitted, with gladness of heart, and O with what entire devotedness! to apply all the energies of his mighty soul to the work before him.

As an instructor of youth and as presiding officer of a literary institution he had few equals, and, in all soberness it may be said, no superior. A strict disciplinarian, and yet full of benignity and kindness, the students loved him. His one great object, the best interests of those committed to his care, was so evident, and, in fact, in all he said and

did, so perfectly transparent, that even an attempt to impose upon or deceive him seemed on their part like the grossest moral obliquity, and very few were so callous as to attempt it. "The secret of his government," says one of his students who has attained a high position in the world of letters, "consisted in awakening and keeping in active exercise a sense of moral obligation. He never appealed to a base or ambitious motive; and, though it might have been proper enough to have done so, he never appealed to the decision of public sentiment—to popular opinion—not even to the opinions of parents and friends. 'Thou God seest me' was the burden of his appeals. In aid of his government he entered into the religious exercises connected with the daily operations of college with such a spirituality and pathos and heavenly-mindedness that they shed a restraining and hallowing influence upon the whole college body."

Deservedly popular as an instructor, and highly appreciated as were his collegiate labours, they were very far from reaching his own standard of duty. He, indeed, was continually pressing toward that mark. A month or two, not indeed of health but of comparative convalescence, would be succeeded by weeks of prostration, which threw him back, disarranged his plans, and infused into his cup bitterness known only to himself and his God. One of the last and, perhaps, most trying of his disappointments was shared by the members of the University, and is a source of unavailing regret to the entire literary world. He commenced a course of lectures upon the theory and practice of scholastic life; and how did he rejoice and give thanks that now, indeed, he had a prospect of doing something worthy of himself and of the position which he occupied.

His whole heart was in the work. Beautiful and full of wisdom were these elaborate productions of his pen; but, as in so many previous undertakings, his projected course was brought suddenly to a close. He was not even permitted to read the lectures he had prepared, and the last, half-finished, remains a memorial—a broken memento of his zeal in the cause of religious education and of his blighted hopes.

It was owing to the peculiarity of his disease that he did not receive from those who were but slightly acquainted with him, and even from some of his more intimate friends, that sympathy to which he was entitled. His general appearance was robust and rugged; he had for the most part a good appetite, and during the intervals of his most acute suffering he was industriously occupied and cheerful, even amid the utter derangement of his entire nervous system. Industry and cheerfulness, these were prevailing traits of his character. Nothing but absolute inability to do anything reconciled him to even a day's idleness. He loved to work, and the wonder is, not that he did so little, but that he performed so much. When others would have thought themselves perfectly justifiable in seeking their own ease, and in the enjoyment of the luxury of returning convalescence, he was busied with his pen striving to rouse the slumbering energies of the Church to vigorous efforts for the education of the young; setting forth her delinquencies upon the great cause which was still nearer to his heart—the cause of missions; arranging and rewriting the brief notes of his travels in foreign lands, from which he prepared those noble volumes which are deservedly placed in the first rank of similar productions; watching with paternal anxiety over the

interests, temporal and spiritual, of the students, and preparing those masterly discourses with which he met them on the last Sabbath of their intercourse, and of which, it is not too much to say, the graduating class of no seminary received, at their departure, a more faithful or a more precious legacy.

Manfully did he struggle with his disease, making it a matter of conscience to avail himself of every means within his reach, that if by any possibility he might do effective service in the cause of God. For this he journeyed by sea and land, in his own and in foreign countries,—put himself under the care of physicians of different schools,—attended with punctilious accuracy to the regulations prescribed for his daily life,—followed the plough for hours at a time,—toiled in his garden like a day-labourer, and might have been seen, especially during his latter years, long ere the chapel-bell had called the students from their beds,

“Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.”

To the common observer these things did not indicate a suffering invalid; nor did his sermons, so long, so energetic, so full of pathos and of power, for the delivery of which he had roused himself from a couch of pain and returned to it at the close of the service. And then how companionable he was, his spirits how buoyant; even when stretched at full length upon the sofa, unable to stand or sit, his conversation seemed to fill the whole room with sunshine, and the hearts of all present with a portion of his own cheerfulness.

No man more deserved the sympathy of his friends, and

none were more grateful for it. He seemed to lean upon those who loved him with all the confiding simple-heartedness of a little child, and nothing gave him more pain than anything like alienation of affection on the part of those he loved. At the General Conference of 1844, where he gave an honest vote upon the case of the slaveholding bishop, he offended grievously many of his Southern friends. He was placed in a position of great delicacy, where, as he foresaw, the discharge of his duty would involve sacrifices; but grace enabled him to make them. "It is perhaps well," said he, "for the trial of faith and integrity, to be fixed in such a position;" and he looked back upon what he had done with a satisfied conscience, although he grieved that for this his earliest ministerial associates and friends should have rudely snapped the ties which had hitherto bound them together. Especially did he feel most keenly the unmerited reproaches heaped upon him in the Southern periodicals. "With one exception," says he, "no man has been so often alluded to in terms of reproach as I have in their papers." And this was done by those whose professions of esteem and love were ardent and unvarying up to that memorable hour. The utterance of sentiments founded upon the clearest convictions of right,—a vote given conscientiously, that was all; but that was the unpardonable offence to many with whom he had in former days taken sweet counsel, and walked unto the house of God in company. "It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it."

His own connexion with slavery while he resided in the Southern States was, in his latter years, a frequent topic of conversation between himself and his more intimate friends. It was a subject upon which he often meditated

when far from the scenes of what he called its "great and appalling evils." This connexion was, to the last of his life, a source of no little uneasiness; and in reviewing it, and taking into the account the circumstances in which he was placed, being ignorant when he married that his wife was the owner of slaves, and living in the midst of "the institution," he was "not able to feel that he did wrong," but at the same time not satisfied that he had done right; for, under the influence of the prevailing customs, he had been induced both to buy and to sell his fellow-men. "All this," says he, "I have prayerfully reviewed many, many times, and with emotions not to be described, yet have I not been able to feel that I sinned in being the owner of slaves. Yet I the more humbly and patiently endure reproach from a feeling that I may have misjudged in this business." That was the corroding thought: "I *may* have misjudged in this business."

Charitable as he was with regard to the conduct of others, and ever anxious to find excuses and palliations for those who had been "overtaken in a fault," he was ever a severe censor upon himself. With an acute conscientiousness, the thought that in any instance he had erred, even in judgment, troubled him; and, while those who knew him best were rejoicing in that clear light which his whole course of conduct was throwing upon the narrow pathway to the skies, he was lamenting in secret places his deviations from that pathway, and clinging to the cross of Christ as his only hope. He studied the character and pondered upon the perfections of the Holy One, contrasting therewith his own unworthiness, until the pervading sentiment of his soul found a fitting utterance in the language of his great prototype in suffering: "I have

heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

The anxiety of friends, and the commonplace questionings of visitors, obliged him to talk much about the state of his health, his protracted afflictions, and ever-baffled expectations. He never magnified them, but would dwell rather, O how joyously! upon the blessings mingled in his cup,—his conjugal happiness, his parental hopes, and the solace afforded him by the circle of dear friends in whose welfare he found one of his chief joys. The remembrance of his outgushing sympathy is to those he loved a most precious legacy, chastened, saddened it may be, by the thought, now that he has passed away, that it was not always reciprocated with the earnest devotedness it deserved.

His self-depreciation in estimating his own labours in the pulpit, the study, the recitation-room, might have been mistaken for affectation but for his manifest candour and singleness of heart. No man had less of what the apostle calls a "voluntary humility." He loved, when utterly unable himself to preach, and when his nervous prostration would permit, to attend upon the ordinances of the Lord's house, and among the gathered assembly on the Sabbath he took his seat with a child-like reverence, his whole demeanour indicating that he came not there to criticise, but to worship and to look up, trustfully, to his Father in heaven for the bread of life. He was wont to say, when speaking of one whose privilege it was to preach frequently in his presence, that not only was he always profited by his discourses, but that his style of preaching was far superior to his own in his best days. But it

mattered little who occupied the pulpit if the sermon evinced careful preparation, and an honest desire to glorify God and to do good. He received it with thankfulness, and in all the congregation there was not one who listened with more fixed attention, or drank in more gratefully the joyful sound.

Specially endearing was the relationship between himself when laid aside from the public duties of his profession, and the pastor of the flock of which he rejoiced to reckon himself a member. Not among the youngest disciples—the lambs of that flock—was there a more gentle spirit, nor one with whom it was so refreshing to converse and to bow at the mercy-seat. With a power of intellect such as Heaven permits to but a favoured few, a world-wide reputation as an accomplished scholar, and the fame of a pulpit orator second to none in either hemisphere,—with these all laid upon the altar, and a spirit chastened and subdued, would he give utterance, in the simplest phrase, to his religious state—his hopes, his prospects, and his fears.

In the earlier part of his Christian life he panted after high religious enjoyments—the raptures of love; but, latterly, his experience having been modified by his lingering afflictions, he seemed rather to long for quiet repose in Christ—for un murmuring, absolute submissiveness. He would talk of life, not as a period by itself, but as a part of his whole existence, and of the change effected by death as even less than many of the changes through which he had already passed. “My heart is fixed;” “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;” “Thy will be done.” “These texts,” said he, “suit me best, and are most expressive of my feelings.” “I may die,” said he,—

and the sentences were written from his lips by his beloved wife,—“I may die just as I am, trusting, believing, but with no rapturous expressions—though I think I should have a glad feeling to find myself on the borders of endless life, with infirmities, disappointments, sorrows, forever at an end. I feel that it cannot be that I should be cast out from the heaven where are gathered the people whom I love, with whose spirits and tastes I sympathize—from the society I relish, to that which I loathe; to the hell where the worldly, the unbelieving, for whose society I have a distaste, with whom I have nothing in common, find their portion. It is unphilosophical to think so; it cannot be in God’s economy to separate me from what I have so long trusted in. He sends to hell those who will not submit to his will; but my will is in harmony with his. The law of affinities will find place.”

Simple language, but expressive! Those who knew him only at a distance, and were unacquainted with his inner life—who had heard his thrilling voice magnifying the grace of the Lord Jesus and the power of his cross, or portraying with a seraph’s fire the saint’s victory over death and the grave, might have expected something more explicit, more joyous; and, as he entered the dark valley, a testimony full of rapturous and triumphant anticipation. But to those who had known his daily walk, who had been favoured with the whisperings of his gentle spirit in the privacy of confidential friendship, and who were summoned to his bed-side when his majestic soul, majestic in its lowliness, was struggling to escape from its shattered prison-house, to them such a testimony was not necessary, and for himself it was enough that then and there he could repeat the declaration, “My will is in harmony with His.”

And thus it was, even as he had said, death found him trusting, believing; with no rapturous expressions but with a warm pressure of the hand, and a blessing for the loved ones around his couch, he passed away, verifying his own prediction, and entering upon the fruition of his modestly expressed but glorious hope, "The law of affinities will find place!"





REV. JABEZ BUNTING, D.D.

PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE.

1820 1828 1836 & 1844.

Jabez Bunting.

It has been said that the name of no English preacher has appeared more in print than that of JABEZ BUNTING, and yet none has shown more dislike of such notoriety. He has openly rebuked the reporters, and *repeated* his old sermons before them, as if to defy them, and with express admonition that they should only get what they had recorded before. He seems studiously to have kept, from the "pen-and-ink sketchers" and "penny-a-liners," the incidents, and even the dates, of his life; he is a wise man, and stops not for even self-defence against the misrepresentations of the press—frequent of late—well knowing that the *practical history* of a public man, if right in itself, will in due time, and demonstratively, explain and vindicate his character.

It is somewhat difficult, then, to make out a veritable narrative of Dr. Bunting's long career. Most extant articles about him have been but general sketches—characteristic portraitures. We have been able, however, to glean some reliable facts, and give them here, woven into as comprehensive and brief an outline as possible.

Richard Boardman, the first preacher sent to this country by John Wesley, passed, on his way to embark, through the village of Moneyash, Derbyshire, in the summer of 1769. He preached there on the prayer of Jabez.

1 Chron. iv, 9, 10. The word was "a savour of life unto life" to, at least, one soul present—a young lady. She never forgot the occasion, and will never forget it in heaven. So deep was the impression of the subject on her memory, that when, ten years later, she became a mother, she devoted her first-born son to God, and "called his name Jabez." He was born at Manchester (not Moneynash, as usually stated) May 13, 1779. Great men, it is said, derive their characters from their mothers. Unquestionably the decided religious character of his mother influenced the whole destiny of Jabez Bunting. His early and great capacity for any kind of success, and the numerous temptations to secular life which beset him, would have diverted, from the self-sacrificing career he chose, almost any ordinary man; but a direction was given to his mind in the outset which has energetically borne him along through his protracted career. His mother carried him, when yet a babe, to Oldham-street Chapel, Manchester, to receive the blessing of the venerable founder of Methodism. Mr. Wesley took him in his arms and pronounced a benediction upon him. The history of Methodism has shown that it was a bequest of his own mantle to the child.

His conversion was brought about by an incident which, though apparently trivial, seems to have had a providential relation to his subsequent life as a great administrator in the Church. His mother, remembering her vows, habitually took him to the love-feasts when he was yet a child. About his fifteenth year Alexander Mather (a name of note) was their pastor. He was a rigid disciplinarian, and admitted no one to these meetings without the "ticket"—the proof of membership in the Society. The boy was

getting ready to go one day, when his mother informed him, with much seriousness, that he could not get admittance, remarking, "I do not know what you think of it, Jabez, but to me it seems an awful thing, that, after having been carried there, you should now be excluded by your own fault." "The Lord used these simple words of maternal solicitude," says an English writer, "to awaken a soul that was to be the instrument of awakening many. Not a few will remember the simplicity and pathos with which he related this fact at the Centenary meeting in City-road Chapel; adding, with a gush of emotion, 'I have to thank God for Methodist discipline as well as for Methodist doctrine.' To use again his own words—'That moment the blow was struck in the right place.' Soon after, he was a regular and earnest member of a class led by his maternal uncle. The class paper, for one quarter in the year after he joined, is still extant, and against the name of Jabez Bunting 'absent' is not once marked. Thus discipline stood allied with his most sacred recollections."

Like most really great men, he early gave evidence of superiority. A physician, Dr. Percival, was so struck with the promise of his mind that he proposed to take him under his patronage. The opportunity was an auspicious one, and, Mrs. Bunting being now a widow, it might have seemed providential; but she remembered her vow, and kept the boy for her Lord. In about his twentieth year he went forth, accompanied by his friend James Wood, (a distinguished name afterwards among Wesleyan Methodists,) to preach his first sermon in a farm-house. His text was, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." The discourse gave to his friend a presentiment of his future success. "I never heard a better sermon," he exclaimed.

“Jabez shall be more honourable than his brethren.” “Nearly forty years from that day,” says an English author, “you might see this same countenance fixed on the same friend, and glowing with like sentiments. They are now in that Oldham-street Chapel, so connected with their early religious course. The black locks of James Wood have become white as snow, and time has also touched his friend. The compact, expressive head is very bald; the pale countenance has become full and strongly coloured; and instead of extreme slenderness, we have advanced corpulency. But the whole air speaks generosity and happiness. Those smiles do not play upon the countenance,—that confidence does not sit in the eye,—those various tones of easy and sometimes playful sagacity, of hope, and humour, and pathos, do not come from the breast of a man who has a bitter or a broken heart. Methodism has reached the age of a hundred years, and her chief men are met to concert measures for duly noting her centenary. To him all look for the clearest exposition and the wisest counsel. He is in the act of opening up that plan which is to evoke such a wonderful response throughout home and missionary Methodism. As his friend watches him with joy and pride, doubtless he thinks of the day when he saw him trembling before his cottage audience. Have not goodness and mercy followed them both? He sits there, one of the most considerable merchants of his native Manchester, President of the Chamber of Commerce, the beloved centre of a large and intelligent circle, one of the most eloquent lay preachers in the country, and about to lay down for the fund, on which his friend is discoursing, the sum of five thousand dollars. And that friend—has not the prayer of Jabez been indeed

answered upon him, and the lot of Jabez repeated? There he stands, in that same chapel where Wesley took him in his arms and blessed him: for more than twenty years he has been, taking him all in all, the first man in the Methodist ministry. Universal respect waits upon 'his virtues and his talents.' He carries an amount of ecclesiastical influence perhaps greater than resides in the person of any other single man in Protestant Christendom,—an influence that touches every corner of the United Kingdom, every colony that England holds, and even many tribes lying beyond the sphere of our national command."

His elevation to this eminence among his brethren was rapid. Methodism demands practical talent. The great man among its people must be a *great worker*, in order to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Brilliant accomplishments, without practical skill and palpable results, are of little estimation in a system so energetic and demonstrative. Bunting had genius, eloquence; but he had also the insight, the common-sense, the wisdom, at once subtle and comprehensive, and, above all, (as a requisite with a multitudinous people and great resources,) a capacious, generous enterprise, that could both project and sustain large schemes. The elements of these qualifications, since so eminently developed, were visible in the outset to the discernment of his brethren. His career was therefore rapid, and in this respect quite anomalous in the Wesleyan Conference.

He entered the Conference ranks in 1799, side by side with another young man who has since become second to him among the notabilities of English Methodism—Robert Newton. His first appointment was at Oldham. His subsequent appointments are a curious record—a striking

indication of the influence of talent to secure, even without ambitious management, its appropriate fields of effort. Though one of the oldest preachers in the connexion, his regular appointments have been limited to but eight places, and those the most important in England:—Oldham, Macclesfield, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Halifax, Leeds, London. He spent eight years, with intermissions, at Manchester; five at Liverpool; about thirty-three, in various positions, in London. These appointments, made not by his own agency, but spontaneously by his brethren, show, more perhaps than does the case of any other man in the history of Methodism, the predominating power of real greatness, its power to concentrate about it the requisite conditions of success—to reinstate itself spontaneously and continuously in the midst of those conditions.

We have already indicated, in general terms, the traits that secured him such an open and successful career. In this country he is not fully understood; we consider him chiefly as the great legislative leader of English Methodism. This he is; but this is not all. His remarkable influence could never have been obtained without eminent *popular* power in the pulpit. Methodism has to do with the masses, and Jabez Bunting has swayed, not merely the ecclesiastical men of his denomination, but its popular mind beyond any other man since Wesley. He is unquestionably one of the greatest *preachers* of the age; but great here, as in other respects, not with adventitious or merely brilliant or rhetorical traits, but with the wisdom and the power which befit the office, and which inherently belong to the man. A writer in the London Christian Times says:—

“You find everywhere that the impression of his minis-

try was not that of grandeur, or brilliancy, or beauty, but chiefly of power. This impression of power was much intensified by the persuasion that the power was legitimate. The hearer knew he had not been beguiled into submission by display, had not been surprised by a mere rush of masterful passion, but that the preacher had fairly approached his reason, challenged his resistance, and, by open stroke sent swift upon open stroke, broke through all his parries, then rushed upon him and bore him clean away. 'What do you think of him?' asked an admirer, who had taken to hear him one little used to Methodist chapels. 'Think of him! There can be but one opinion: it is, Surrender at discretion.' But his power, if oratorically great, was religiously wonderful. That power, it is true, led the judgment and stirred the heart, but it chiefly touched the soul. His discourses were thoroughly prepared. Theology and style bore alike the mark of patient care. But the theology had been studied, not to make it ingenious, but to make it clear; the composition had been studied, not to make it ornate, but expressive. The argument, after being elaborated in the understanding, was not passed through a decorative fancy, but through an ardent heart. Every one saw that the preacher was not there to preach the finest possible sermon, but to make the greatest possible impression. Every one saw that, in the pulpit before them, the moving power was a resolve to awaken sleeping souls. This burnt as a fire—a fire hot enough to fuse all his theology, his rhetoric, his logic. These were all there; but the hardest argument, or the most solid truth, by the time it had passed through the hidden furnace of that heart, was melted down, and the stream that poured from those glowing lips was dense and burning as

a stream of lava. One most intelligent friend assures us, that while Dr. Bunting laboured in Leeds, more persons were converted through his preaching than had been through that of any predecessor, at least of his popular order of talent. And a worthy man in that town, whose judgment would not be formed on just the same grounds, has, in his own way, given us a like testimony. 'He *was* a soul-saving preacher. Bless you, all the soul-saving preachers we have now-a-days are only children to him. O what a power was with his word! to hear him on a Sunday evening!' While stationed the second time in Manchester, the members in his circuit were doubled in number. His sermons were often highly charged with the terrors of the Lord. He had no fear of proclaiming 'the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.' To this day many a heart bears strongly marked the impression burnt into it thirty years ago by some of his discourses. It was not our own lot to hear him in those times. We have only had that privilege since years had abated his powers. But by many a fire-side, from preacher and layman, from the refined and the illiterate, we have gathered for our own admonition impressions of the preaching that marked his prime. Everywhere we have found that with his word came a tremendous power upon a sinner's soul. All bear, as vividly as if it had been yesterday, the recollection of those times when, amid his lucid and animated discussion, a blush rose on his pale countenance and deepened to crimson; his clear, flexible voice pitching higher, till it sometimes, but rarely, broke into a scream, his words coming thicker, his looks darting right into the breast of his auditory, and then a call to repentance broke forth and shook them all with

peal, and roll, and breathless lull, and loud concluding crash. A sermon on 'Remember Lot's wife' was often mentioned by Mr. Wood as an unequalled specimen of this kind of power. Another on 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees,' is considered by a very judicious critic the most remarkable he ever heard. An appeal to those he had himself baptized, we have heard named by several as the noblest burst of eloquence they ever heard. And thus you find in thousands of intelligent minds the most vivid impression of discourses or passages which he delivered half a lifetime ago. All agree that they never heard a man of great reputation who could so safely be pointed out to young ministers as a model. His powers were cultivated not to dazzle, not to fascinate, but to subdue. His Master's work was done; and the instrument had more abundant honour than if honour had been his aim."

Thus truly great in the pulpit, he has also been vigorously useful out of it—the master manager of the plans of Methodism since Wesley. Indeed, nearly all the grand schemes of the denomination in England have sprung, directly or indirectly, from his energy. As soon as Dr. Coke died, Jabez Bunting became the chief director of the missionary movement of Methodism—the greatest movement in its history—and to him more than any other man it owes the precedence which it now takes of all the other Protestant missionary enterprises of the world. He had offered to go to India himself as a missionary, and has been heard to say, "Some of the happiest moments of my life, next to those that immediately followed my conversion, were when I fully presented myself to the Lord as a missionary to India." He was wisely prevented from

going, however, that he might do a larger work for missions at home. He helped to organize the Wesleyan missionary interest; took the platform for it with triumphant success; was sent to London that he might supervise it, and there made one of the noblest sacrifices for it that could be made by such a mind. He was endowed with taste and capacity for literature, and had formed with a friend some favourite literary projects; but on foreseeing the results of the missionary undertakings of the "Connexion," he wrote to his friend:—"The die is cast. If I give to our missions the attention they require, I shall not have any time hereafter for literature." "This," says the London Christian Times, "must have been a conscious sacrifice of both reputation and enjoyment; but it was deliberately made, and, consequently, except his sermon on Justification by Faith, which has gone through seven editions, you will now inquire in vain for his productions. Another sermon, preached in Dr. Winter's Chapel before the Sunday-School Union, is, we believe, out of print."

He was the first to introduce laymen into the management of the missionary affairs of the Church, and not without some clerical opposition. He has always had the good judgment to see the value of their services, especially in financial matters, where clergymen are, naturally enough, found wanting. Beginning with the missionary society, he urged on this improvement "till, upon every Connexional committee, laymen were placed in equal number with ministers. He also proposed and carried the admission of laymen into the District meetings, so that through his legislation no matter of Connexional finance is settled by the Conference; all this being done by mixed committees, and the Conference merely acting as a court of record for

their measures." So says an English authority; and another author affirms that, "It is a fact but little known, and, by those who have been accustomed to hear this great man railed at as a priestly dictator, not even suspected, that nearly every measure which has popularized the institutions of Methodism—which has given to the people a more liberal representation—has originated with Dr. Bunting."

He has also led the way in the great educational enterprises of Wesleyan Methodism. These are numerous, and now potent in their endowment and influence. We can refer to but one of them, the one at the head of which, as president, he still stands, and the post at which he will probably fall—The Wesleyan Theological Institute. This is an interest of the denomination that he anticipated with solicitude for many years, and has fostered with unremitting care since its birth. At the very first Conference held by Wesley, some such provision for the education of young preachers was proposed. The proposition was repeated at the next session; it was never lost sight of by the Wesleyan Conference until it stood realized in two of their noblest denominational structures—one at Richmond, in the South; the other at Didsbury, in the North. About ten years ago the Richmond Seminary was opened with an address by Dr. Bunting, which we give, though in the meager outline of a newspaper report, from the London Watchman, as indicating somewhat the history of the design:—

"Dr. Bunting then addressed the assemblage, in which he entertained strong objections to this place being called the Richmond *College*; it was the Richmond *Institution*;—to speak more diffusely, the Richmond Branch of the Wesleyan Theological Institution. He hoped his excellent

friends, to whom would be permanently and regularly intrusted the management of the institution, and the education of the young brethren, would concur with him in the opinion he had just expressed. There were many things implied in what was properly speaking a college, which they did not aim to realize in this establishment. He congratulated the friends of the institution on the numerous assemblage now congregated. It was nearly a hundred years ago—namely, at the Conference of 1744—that the propriety of instituting a ‘seminary,’ as it was then termed, was first mooted; and this institution was, therefore, in principle anything but an innovation. The question proposed to the Conference of 1744 was, ‘Can we have a seminary for labourers?’ He hoped the young brethren who were receiving instruction in the Theological Institution would always bear this in mind, that when the establishment of such an institution or seminary was first suggested, it was proposed for the instruction and training of ‘labourers.’ His young brethren must remember that they were to be ‘labourers;’ and if he thought that anything they might learn, or any habits which they might acquire in that institution would unfit them for labour, or disincline them to labour, he would most deeply regret its establishment. But he anticipated a very different result. He anticipated that, by the blessing of God upon the assiduous efforts of their tutors, they would, in this institution, learn how to labour, and be strengthened in their determination to labour faithfully and zealously, wherever their lot might be cast. He had stated that, at the Conference of 1744, the question was proposed, ‘Can we have a seminary for labourers?’ The answer was, ‘If God spares us till another Conference.’ The subject was resumed at the

next Conference, and it was asked, 'Can we have a seminary for labourers *yet?*' '*Not yet,*' was the answer; '*not till God gives us a proper tutor.*' The want of a proper tutor was the only reason assigned why an establishment similar in principles and objects to this institution was not made coeval with the earliest periods of Wesleyan Methodism. At the end of a century, that which, even at the early period he had referred to, was felt to be a desideratum had now, by the providence of God, been supplied. An institution had been established which, for the sake of convenience, had branched into two divisions: one of those branches having been opened last September, at Didsbury, near Manchester, which was called the Northern Branch; and the other, or Southern Branch, being that which they were now assembled, in a more formal and solemn manner than had hitherto been done, to dedicate to the service of God. They seemed, indeed, to have all they required, except two things. They did want more money. (Hear, hear.) It might be said, 'Why did you erect such an expensive building as this? We cannot help doing justice to the architectural merit of the building; we must allow that it is beautiful and commodious; but have you not spent upon the erection of the building money which might have been better applied to the support of the institution?' He would reply, 'No; these premises are *a present* to the institution, from the Centenary Fund, *by a grant made for the specific purpose of such an erection*; and I am informed that not one farthing of the money subscribed by individual friends for the support of the institution—for the maintenance and instruction of the students—will have to be appropriated to defray the cost of the building. (Hear, hear.) He believed it would not

be necessary to trench upon any funds contributed for the maintenance of the institution; but that the sum granted from the Centenary Fund would just be sufficient to defray the expenses of the purchase, and of the erection of this beautiful and commodious structure, which was so well calculated to accomplish the *monumental* and *commemorative* part of the various noble objects contemplated in the original plan of the Centenary Fund. Since, then, they had obtained such convenient accommodation—and since there was in the building a considerable number of students, to whom he hoped more would be hereafter added—it now remained for them to provide means for the annual support of the institution.”

Dr. Bunting feels satisfied with the results of the measure. At the session of the British Conference in August, 1852, after the presentation of the usual resolutions in respect to the Theological Institution, he arose, and, among other things, declared “*that he was more than ever convinced that the institution was of God—of God in its origin, and in its progress to that state of maturity and extensive usefulness which it had now reached.*”

Of this noble institution we give several engraved illustrations, as it is the final official responsibility of the great man whom we have been describing.

Dr. Bunting, like all first-class minds, is *variously* great. We have considered him as a preacher and as a practical manager. As a *debater* he is esteemed without a rival among his brethren. He is chary of his remarks in Conference sessions, well knowing that frequent and unimportant speeches there are a sure forfeiture of influence, as well as a vexatious embarrassment of business. He seldom speaks over five minutes at a time, and then after

WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, RICHMOND, ENGLAND



most others are through, and for the purpose of concentrating the dispersed and bewildered thoughts of the body, of allaying exasperated feelings, or clinching the subject by some summary and conclusive argument. When, however, occasion requires it, he can enter the arena full armed, and fight the combat out—invariably with victory. Mr. Everett, who has lately become noted as his assailant, once gave the following sketch of him as a debater:—

“See him: there he sits on the platform, surrounded by the leading members of the Conference, his elbow on the table, and his chin embedded in the palm of his hand. A subject of importance being on the tapis, and the speaker being low, or at a distance, the hand is speedily relieved of the chin, and placed behind the ear, where it remains as a substitute for a trumpet, gathering together the words, while the sense which it is intended to aid drinks in the sound. An occasional note is made on a slip of paper, or the back of a letter, in the course of a protracted discussion; but memory, which rarely ever fails him, is mostly depended upon. Now, he is calm and dignified; but in an instant the scene is changed. The speaker has the misfortune to oppose some favourite theory, to trench upon some of the peculiarities of Methodism, or belongs to the other side of the house: that moment, the eye of our pleader is darted like the eye of a lynx along the line of sound, and either quails or rouses the person who has gained his attention. He again appears tranquil; but it is the tranquillity of a man who is pondering upon what has been said. Speaker succeeds speaker, till at length silence ensues, and, during the momentary pause, he looks round; but no one essaying to rise, he considers his own time to have come. He loves the closing speech;

and now that he is on his feet, let the eye be thrown around the audience, and all will be seen on the tip-toe—all will be still to the ear. The first feeling in operation in the breasts of previous speakers, refers as much to themselves as the subject; and the first thought in the mind of the mere hearer, is inadvertently directed to the same quarter, and is followed up with anxiety or pleasure—looking forward to see how it will fare with such as have thus entered the arena of debate, as well as toward the fate of the question in which he himself may have an interest, and which absolutely hangs upon the breath, and is to be decided by him upon whom every eye is now fixed, as by fascination. Listen to him: he takes, perhaps, at first, a dispassionate view of the general question, then gives you his own opinion; next goes on to establish certain positions; notices the remarks of previous speakers, so far as they seem to interfere with his own sentiments; and, lastly, proceeds to the formal reply, in which he often takes upon himself the *onus probandi*, either classifying the arguments of his opponents, or taking up their objections separately, as may best suit his purpose; encircling himself all the while in a tower of strength, from whose impregnable walls he nods defiance to all his assailants. Very often, at a moment when a man is congratulating himself on the probability of a happy escape, or of finding his arguments valid, by a less early notice, he will come down upon him in an instant, like an unexpected flash of lightning, broad and vivid, shivering to pieces, by a single stroke, the whole superstructure he had reared, and upon which he had long gazed with the fondness of a parent on a favourite child—compelling him at the time by its glare to shrink back into himself. On



ENTRANCE HALL AND PRINCIPAL STAIRCASE.

these occasions he can be sarcastic, solemn, playful, or otherwise. But he never approaches a subject without illuminating it, and rarely retires from the field without conquest; followed by the smiles of his friends, and leaving the opposing powers in a state of suspense or blank astonishment. We feel unwilling to leave this part of his character, and yet we are afraid to proceed with it, owing to our incompetency to do it justice. We have heard pleaders at the bar, and statesmen in the senate, (a place, by the way, which he is very fond of attending;) but we solemnly aver, that, for reply, we never heard a near approach to him. His replies are like the set speeches of some of our first speakers; so full, so regular, so neat, so consecutive, so pertinent, so easy, so ready! He has no set time for emphasis, but rises in feeling with the importance of his subject, and the people go up with him, till both gain the summit of the mount, and the latter feel it difficult to descend again, or stoop to common things. His eloquence is irresistible. Had he been brought up to the bar, or been trained for the senate, he would never have paused in his upward career, till he had either been premier or lord high chancellor; and where he is, he is a king among his subjects. His presence of mind never forsakes him. No man makes fewer mistakes, and he never leaves an advantage unimproved. It is dangerous for an adversary to slumber or be off his guard in his presence. He is always awake himself, and, like the famous Erskine, is as daring as he is skilful; taking advantage of the least opening, and defending himself with caution. His fine spirit and courage, when let out, give vigour and direction to the whole, bearing down all resistance. He is not like some speakers, full

of repetition, recurring again and again to the same topic or view of the subject, till he has made the impression complete; he rarely goes back to the same ground, which, in the language of an eminent writer, he has 'utterly wasted by the tide of fire he has rolled along it.' He completes his work as he goes on. He has a preternatural quickness of apprehension, which enables him to see at a glance what costs other minds the labour of an investigation. It is this that makes ordinary business easy to him, and hence he has been heard to say that he could never make what some men call speeches—that his were all matters of mere detail in business. He is not only quick, but sure. And though he has fire, yet it is of that kind that he has rarely the heat of passion to plead or regret. As the head of a party, he has none of its prejudices to plead, having no person to serve; and he has few, if any, peculiarities of a personal character; no 'mental idiosyncrasies,' as Lord Brougham would say, to indulge, which produce capricious fancies and crotchets. His faculties are always unclouded and unstunted, ever to be depended on; and his judgment secures him success and adherents."

Aged, broken in health, afflicted with the recent fearful convulsions of Methodism in England, Jabez Bunting still holds on his undeviating course. His faculties are yet vigorous; he is still the great counsellor of his denomination, and though incapable of moving to and fro in its field as he has for more than half a century, he is nevertheless still its guiding mind.





W. N. CONFERENCE, BROMFIELD ST. CHURCH, BOSTON.

The Old New-England Conference.

WE have given, in the preceding pages, sketches of distinguished men in various fields of Methodism—Wesley, Fletcher, and Bunting in England—Garrettson, Emory, Levings, and Olin in the middle American Conferences—Roberts and M'Kendree in the West—Hedding, Pickering, and Fisk in the East. In presenting these individual examples, we have been aware how many noble names are omitted, and have wished that our space would allow a fuller representation of each, if it had even to be in an aggregate form. The beautiful and remarkably truthful plate, which we here insert, enables us to do so in respect to New-England, with the hope that in some subsequent volume we may find it possible to represent, in similar manner, other divisions of our great evangelical field.

The engraving is a very accurate representation of the interior of the old Bromfield-street Church, Boston—a *locale* of sanctified reminiscences to Eastern Methodists. The scene is now entirely transformed; it has given place to one of the noblest chapels of American Methodism; but no one who worshipped within the old structure will ever forget, amid the modernized and beautiful conveniences of the new one, the precious associations of those days when

Hedding, Pickering, Merritt, Mudge, Kibby, Brodhead, Fillmore, Lindsay, and others of the old *Legio Fulminea*, thundered from its pulpit. It has been the most powerful battery of Methodism in New-England—occupied by its most powerful evangelists, and the gathering place of its most powerful corps of membership.

The portraits in the engraving are mostly correct likenesses—remarkably accurate if we consider the diminished scale upon which they are presented. TIMOTHY MERRITT, one of the intellectual champions of the denomination, stands in the pulpit. He was a thoroughly devoted man, and though now crumbling in the dust of the sepulchre, his influence is still felt through New-England, especially among such as are personally interested in that great distinction of our theology, the doctrine of Christian Perfection—a favourite theme of his pen and his preaching. Some of his literary works have taken permanent rank in our Book-Concern Catalogue. Take him all in all, he was, perhaps, in his day, the foremost man in the New-England Methodist ministry;—wise in counsel, powerful in the pulpit, formidable in controversy, holy in life.

Beside him sits GEORGE PICKERING, whose features will compare well with those of the larger engraving, given elsewhere in this volume. His attitude, even to the position of the hands, will be recalled by those who have seen him in the old Bromfield-street pulpit. DR. FISK is addressing the Conference at the foot of the pulpit-stairs. The artist has somewhat idealized his head and features, but not more so than the English painter in the larger likeness given with our sketch of him. In the present instance the outline of his person is accurately given, even to the old clerical style of dress, which he did not disdain to copy

from the fathers of our ministry. At his left sits the venerable HEDDING, with somewhat longer hair and less corrugated features than in our larger engraving, but not the less truthful for the time at which the portrait was taken. Many of his friends, who recollect his appearance at that earlier period, will prefer this more genial face to the later and more time-worn expression. He was the favourite bishop of the men with whom he is surrounded, having been their candidate at the time of his election, and for many years resident among them. He sits in their presence as among his brethren, tranquil and beloved. The later scenes of strife, so much lamented, though now passed, had not yet marred his and their brows.

DANIEL FILLMORE sits at the table as secretary, an office which he honourably sustained for many years in the old New-England Conference. He had been Hedding's associate in the Bromfield-street charge, and saw both the dark day and the day of deliverance to Boston Methodism. Preëminent in that "meekness of wisdom" which is commended in the Scriptures, ever kindly and cordial with his brethren, of persuasive talents in the pulpit, and unusual capacity for the labours and difficult offices of the pastor, he has served the Church through many years with an unblemished name and unfaltering integrity.

First on his left is seen the ample brow of the venerable BRODHEAD, one of the founders of New-England Methodism, and during a part of his life well-known to the country as a member of Congress. The Boston Post said at the time of his death:—

"Possessing naturally a strong mind, warm affections, and an imposing person, he was a popular as well as an

able and pious preacher; and probably no man in New-England had more personal friends, or could exercise a more widely-extended influence. He was repeatedly elected to the Senate of his adopted State, and to Congress, yet was always personally averse to taking office; and though he spoke but seldom on political subjects, the soundness of his judgment, and the known purity of his life, gave much weight to his opinions. In the early days of his ministry he endured almost incredible fatigue and hardship in carrying the glad tidings of the gospel to remote settlements, often swimming rivers on horseback, and preaching in his clothes saturated with water, till he broke down a naturally robust constitution, and laid the foundation of disease, which affected him more or less during his after life. In his last days, the gospel, which he had so long and so faithfully preached to others, was the never-failing support of his own mind. To a brother clergyman who inquired of him, a short time before his death, how he was, he said: 'The old vessel is a wreck, but I trust in God the cargo is safe!'

As a preacher, he possessed more than ordinary talents; his clear understanding, combined with quick sensibilities and a vivid imagination, could not but render him eloquent on the themes of religion. He was partial to the benignant topics of the gospel, and often would his congregations and himself melt into tears under the inspiration of his subjects. When he treated on the divine denunciations of sin, it was with a solemnity, and at times with an awful grandeur, that overwhelmed his hearers. "I heard him," says a veteran of our ministry, "when I was a young man, preach on the Last Judgment, in Bromfield-street chapel, on a Sabbath evening, and if the terrible reality had occurred that night

its impression could hardly have been more awfully alarming." At such times, "seeing the terror of the Lord," he persuaded men with a resistless eloquence, his large person and noble countenance seemed to dilate with the majesty of his thoughts, and he stood forth before the awe-struck assembly with the authority of an ambassador of Christ.

At the right of Brodhead, the benign face of ENOCH MUDGE will be recognised by his old hearers—a man dearly beloved by New-England as the first Methodist preacher raised up within her bounds, an honour which has the signal peculiarity that it can never be impaired—can never be shared by another. He was small in stature, stoutly framed, with a full ruddy face, a noble phrenological development, abundant but silvered hair, a kindliness of manner that insinuated cordial feelings into the rudest heart in his company, and an eloquence, in the pulpit, always fresh and winning. He braved heroically the first and hardest battles of Methodism, pursuing his itinerant career in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and died at last amid the benedictions of all the Eastern Church.

In manners, he would have been a befitting companion for St. John. The spirit of Christian charity imbued him; hopefulness, cheerfulness, entire reliance on God, confidence in his friends, extreme care to give no offence, and a felicitous relish of the reliefs and comforts of green old age, were among his marked characteristics. He was distinguished by fine pulpit qualifications—fertility of thought, a warmth of feeling without extravagance, a peculiar richness of illustration, and a manner always self-possessed, and marked by the constitutional amenity of his temper. None were ever wearied under his discourses. He published a

volume of excellent sermons for mariners, and many poetical pieces of more than ordinary merit.

At the right of Mudge stands the veteran ASA KENT, who still survives—one of the few remaining members of that corps of strong men who laid the foundations of our cause in the New-England States. He is small in person; his face bears the marks of extreme years, and he totters on the verge of the grave; but his faculties retain a remarkable degree of vigour, as his occasional writings in our periodicals show. His memory is a store-house of old Methodistic reminiscences, and our historical writers owe much to his recollections and sound judgment. Vermont, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island have been the principal fields of his labour. He shared the severest conflicts of our cause in the former, and is a living history of the Church in that State. The great peculiarities of Methodism are with him, as with most of our early preachers, very precious. “I believe,” he says, in a letter once addressed to the writer of this article,—“I believe the Lord cleansed my soul from sin more than forty years ago. I have not steadily enjoyed the witness of it; but, for nearly that time, have seen no terrors in death or the grave. The doctrine of holiness is my comfort and joy, and I hope, through mercy, to dwell with God forever, as a sinner saved by grace; even so. Amen.”

In about the centre of the pews JOSEPH A. MERRILL will be recognised, with his face turned toward the spectator. His name has become quite familiar in the New-England Conference, not only from his own long connexion with it, but also by the number of worthy sons whom his careful training has, under God, given to the ministry. He was a “strong man”—a good, sound preacher, unshakable in his

adhesion to the great principles of Methodism, a persevering labourer in many hard fields, the associate of Ruter and Fisk in the early struggles of the Church for educational institutions, and a man of unusual sagacity and skill in the practical management of public affairs. His frame was large, though not corpulent, his head amply developed, and his features regular.

On his left sits EBENEZER F. NEWELL, another of the survivors of the first battles of the Church in the East. His labours have been chiefly in Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts. His memoirs have been published; they are very entertainingly characteristic, and full of illustrations of the hardships and triumphs of our primitive preachers. Mr. Newell is remarkable for his exceeding amiability, the warmth of his religious sympathies, his ready conversational powers, and the many interesting recollections of the "old times" with which his conversation is enlivened.

Behind him, and in the adjacent right-hand pew, sits THOMAS C. PIERCE, a man well-beloved, especially in Vermont and Massachusetts, where he laboured faithfully and with much success through a long life. He was slight in person and infirm in health, but always abounding in the work of the Lord. He had good talents, a rare aptness in the illustration of truth, a persuasive, winning manner in his discourse, and was an unusually successful pastor. He lived a good working life, and died well, leaving a name in the Church that is as ointment poured forth.

To the left of Mr. Pierce, and closely behind him, are seen the full and kindly features of ABRAHAM D. MERRILL, who still lives and labours in the New-England Conference. He is large in person, with a capacious head, ample features, and a voice of music, which he not unfrequently uses

with the force of a trumpet; for, though a Jeremiah in pathos, he is also known in the Church as a son of thunder. His talents are good, his appeals sometimes overwhelming; and he is, in fine, what every preacher of the gospel should be, a "revivalist."

At his right, in the same pew with Thomas C. Pierce, sits EPAPHRAS KIBBY, one of the strong men among "the giants of those days" when Methodism had to advance amid continual conflicts. Fifty-five years ago he entered the itinerancy; he lingers still among his brethren with erect form and vigorous faculties, but disabled strength. He saw the great battles and the triumphs of our cause in Maine, at the beginning of the century. He was one of the most powerful and popular of our early preachers in Boston. He formed the first Methodist Society in the city of New-Bedford. Mr. Kibby is tall and slight in person, extremely neat in dress, and venerable with age. His talents were of a very superior order. His imagination furnished him with vivid illustrations, always abundant, chaste, and appropriate. His reasoning was strikingly perspicuous, direct, and conclusive, his language remarkable for both elegance and force. Though he never used notes in the pulpit, yet a large portion of his sermons were fully written—the cause, probably, of that rich and correct diction which so eminently characterized even his impromptu addresses. He has been a fond lover of good literature, and abounds in general knowledge. His judgment has always been cautious and safe, his zeal steady and effective, his attachment to the doctrines and economy of Methodism unwavering amid many calls and temptations to more comfortable stations in other communions. Without ambition or pretension, he attained to a rare popularity as a

preacher in the days of his vigour. He has accomplished distinguished service in the Church, and is endeared to it, in most of New-England, by precious recollections.

Near Mr. Kibby, at the head of the pew in front of him, sits ISAAC BONNEY, another of the veterans still remaining among his brethren, though unable to share their labours. Shaken by more than threescore and ten years, and nearly half a century of itinerant life, he has retired into the superannuate ranks, where, however, he is not forgotten, but enjoys not only the respect, but the love of his many friends.

He has been distinguished by modest worth, a pure exemplariness of life, an indisposition to accept the preferments of honour or place among his brethren, a sound but unpretending piety, a discriminating judgment, good pulpit ability, and success in his labours. Isaac Bonney is, in fine, one of those modest but genuine men, who are prized immeasurably more by discerning minds among their friends than they are by themselves, and whose associates learn to value them higher as they know them better. He is an example of our primitive ministry which the future historian of Methodism will commemorate with pleasure.

Not far off EDWARD T. TAYLOR stands, with folded arms, in the aisle. He is noted through the country as an original, both in character and talents—an orator, *sui generis*—a wit overflowing with humour—a man of strong sense, of deep pathos, of the freshest poetic thought—a powerful preacher—a gentleman, even to gracefulness, in manners—a murderer of the queen's English, and, best known as “the mariner's preacher of Boston.”

Immediately behind Mr. Taylor sits DAVID KILBURN.

He has seen about threescore years and ten, and has spent nearly half a century in the ministerial work in almost all the New-England States. His preaching has been accompanied with good sense and the unction from above. His frame is large, his head well developed, his features full and benevolent, and many are the seals to his ministry.

Such are a few, and only a few, of the men of note who belonged to the old New-England Conference before its division into its present half-dozen sections. They and their coadjutors had the hardest field of Methodism in the nation; they have made it the best, in the estimation of many, and all will admit it to be, at least, among the best. The growth of the Church within the Eastern States has not only been great, numerically and morally, but in all those material provisions which give security and permanence to a denomination—in good and well-located chapels, literary institutions, &c.—it is probably before any other portion of our common cause. One honour, at least, will be conceded it; it has had greater difficulties to overcome than any other portion of the denomination, and has fully conquered them. Its success is a common honour to us all.

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